101 both town and district are bisected by the main route be-
361 tween the capitals of the Haitian and the Dominican repub-
[491] lics. Yet, once again, this geographical nearness but distorts
the psychological distance between Mirebalais and the me-
[494] tropolis. For though the busses, converted from camions, pass
to and from the coastal city several times a week, the valley
and even the town which is its center drowse in essential isola-
tion. A few hundred yards off the main road find the Haitian
peasant following the mode of life of his forebears, oblivious
of events outside the valley. Only for a few of the *notables* of
the town, the *gros nègres,* who have personal, political, or busi-
ness contacts with Port-au-Prince, is the comparative proxim-
ity to the capital meaningful.

174 It is not possible to say how long this valley has been in-
habited. Certainly the early Indians roamed there; and there,
as in other parts of the island of Hispaniola, the tragedy of
their extinction under the brutality of early Spanish rule must
● 175 have taken place. Moreau de St. Mery, to whom all students of
103 Haiti must acknowledge a debt of gratitude for his painstak-
ingly accurate reports of life on the island, gives the derivation
of its name.

> "Mirebalais received its name," he says, "because of the enormous numbers of wild animals the first Frenchmen found there, which recalled to them the small district in the region of Poitou [in France], called Mirebalais, where some of them had probably first seen the light of day. These quadrupeds, first introduced by the Spaniards, had no difficulty in multiplying there after the Indians had disappeared from their native land and the Spaniards, reduced in numbers, were obliged to abandon the great plains, so that horses, cattle, etc. came to exercise exclusive domain."[1]

● 175 St. Mery's work, which traces the development of Mirebalais as one of the parishes of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, makes it

possible to gain a historical perspective of the valley in which 175
our interest centers. As late as 1702, he tells us, only a few individuals were settled there, and these were mainly hunters and herders, since the policy of that day, based on the official belief that the future of the valley lay in using to the full its grazing resources rather than in the development of agriculture, caused all agricultural activity to be prohibited. Two [177]
decades later, however, when the cultivation of indigo had been successfully introduced, agricultural development proceeded apace. In 1739, in addition to more than a score of indigo-production centers, the valley boasted of numerous coffee, cotton, and cocoa plantations, and by 1789 was a recognized agricultural region.

But for the fact that the great plantations are no longer 241
there, this aspect of life in Mirebalais has been little changed 178
by revolutions and the abolition of slavery. Indigo, of course, has lost its place as an important product, while maize is now among the most significant crops, as might be looked for in the change from a plantation system to one of small individual ownership which was brought about by Haitian independence. But cotton and sugar-cane are still major crops, and coffee, which grows well on the mountainsides, is largely cultivated.

Moreau de St. Mery, writing in 1789, speaks of the French 175
who peopled the valley as "still showing the traits which 648
marked the early colonials. They are good, frank, brave, and opposed to all coercion." In 1723 "they marched with others from the district of the Artibonite" in an uprising against the arbitrary policies of the French West Indies Company, which Charlevoix, one of the first historians of Haiti, so vividly described.[1] In 1729 and 1736 the folk of Mirebalais defended their eastern frontier against attacks by the neighboring Spaniards; eleven years later one hundred and ten of them helped with the defense of the town of St. Louis, which was menaced by the hostile maneuvers of the British admiral

175 648 Davers. In 1768 and 1769 they were " but tranquil spectators of the troubles caused by the re-establishment of the militia," the local military forces numbering at this time 260 whites and 291 *affranchis,* or free men of color.[3]

175 167 This white population was made up chiefly of those who came directly from France or were born in the colony, but also included were the Acadians, one of the most interesting groups who settled in Mirebalais. Fleeing from Newfoundland, they were brought to Haiti before they were sent to Louisiana, and in the course of this migration left some of their number in the valley. It is recorded that on the 26th day of October 1764, in consequence of " a Memorial presented by the Chamber of Agriculture of Port-au-Prince, which stressed the healthfulness of Mirebalais,"[4] each of a number of these Acadian families was allotted a plot of eight hundred square paces, not far from the town. The ending of this episode, however, was not happy, for, transported into a tropical climate that failed to measure up to the claims made for it, the Acadians paid so heavy a toll that soon all trace of them vanished.

175 569 But facts such as these tell little of the fundamental social and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, where Negro slavery constituted the foundation upon which the whole structure of life was erected. That Mirebalais was no exception to the prevailing economic regime is shown by Moreau de St. Mery's figures for the district, yet what stresses existed between the masters, the free persons of color, and the slaves, no record remains to show. Despite the fact that slaves and free men of color were accepted in the armed militia, the 175 567 669 situation was far from tranquil. When, after the French Revolution, there were signs that the decree[5] which accorded to the free men of color political rights equal to those of the whites was in danger of being nullified in practice, it was at Mirebalais that the colored men assembled to insist on the enforcement of this order.[6] Together with some slaves they freed, they formed the nucleus of an army " that under the leader-

ship of a very intelligent mulatto named Bauvais" gained 175
some successes "over the undisciplined forces in Port-au- 567
Prince" and forced the inhabitants of the capital to recog- 569
nize the power of this group by entering into a definite treaty with them.[7]

There are other indications that life in the valley did not 175
fail to reflect the discontent of the black slaves. Writing in 567
1830, Mackenzie, who was the first British Consul-General to the Haitian Republic, remarked:

> "It is said by some of the best informed Haitians, that among the mountains that stretch from the neighbourhood of Mirebalais to the coast on the east of Jacmel, there is an extensive association of the descendants of the Maroon negroes, whose independence had been recognised long before the revolution by the then existing government." [8]

It is thus apparent that the institution of *marronage*, whereby runaway slaves established themselves in the mountains, in many instances living for years beyond the reach of capture and free from attack, was known in Mirebalais as it was elsewhere. Mirebalais was also not without contact with the great 175
heroes of Haitian history. Toussaint L'Ouverture conquered and lost the town several times before it became a strategic point "from which his lieutenants, Dessalines and Christophe, menaced Arcahaie and the plain of the Cul-de-Sac." [9]

If but little has been recorded concerning Mirebalais before 175
Haitian independence, even less is known of its later history. 162
Mackenzie, reporting the population of Haiti district by district, gives that of Mirebalais in 1802 as 53,649; but in 1825 as only 16,037.[10] Whether the region included under the term 175
"Mirebalais" differed at the two periods, or whether the 569
hardships resulting from the internal strife that racked Haiti [162]
after independence had been gained took a toll of the size suggested by these figures cannot be said. That Mirebalais was an [131]

175 important point in the warfare between the northern Empire
[669] of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well
[131] known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely
fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control
of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the
strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover
[162] more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has
been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish
church.[12]

361 From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town
has been the center of its life. The government of the com-
[632] mune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best
schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it
[363] is a small town, numbering less then two hundred and fifty
houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares
stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes.
361 The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small,
342 are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and
roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda,
however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an
afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the
women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses
that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the
361 storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place*, or town
square, lies at the point where the principal route between
Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to
[697] the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending
long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades
600 at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

North of the square stands the church, a substantial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed 361 344
over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other [346]
public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite 175
the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions 648
for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco up- 625
rising of 1918–20,[18] it was one of the first districts where the Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small 625
detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept bar- 697
racks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the [342]
same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited [292]
prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesti- 366
cated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a 461
camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more 512
rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its 476
way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" *vodun* drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites,* which perform co-operative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the 512
disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. 796 These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the 788 great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness 796 of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the [184] great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de 527 l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course 175 it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its [178] history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco 175 uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais experience 648 military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

175 648 Artibonite and Tombe rivers just outside the town. Today Cacos who went through this campaign will tell how sniping was carried on from the "English fort" on the heights to the east of the town and will recount how dangerous it was made for Marines to go unguarded even to the river-banks to draw water. Yet after two or three years the overthrow of the Caco forces brought peace once more to Mirebalais. And while the intervention of the United States has caused significant changes in the larger aspects of Haitian economy and in the political life of the Republic as a whole, yet as concerns the inner life of the people of this valley it seems to have passed without any discernible effect.

175 211 Today in the *place* are found three records of its past. The first of these, in the middle of the square, is a tall palm tree, which in Haiti is the emblem of its attainment of freedom and independence, and near it a rostrum symbolizing the author-
211 ity of the central government. The second is the tomb of an
175 overlord of Mirebalais when independent Haiti was not a
764 republic. In florid lettering can be read the tribute engraved
on its top:

Ici
Dort de l'éternel sommeil
Pierre Cazimir de Vincent
décédé le 13 Août 1856, à l'âge de 71 ans
de son vivant Duc de Mirebalais
et
Commandant de la 4ème Division
Militaire de la Province de
l'Ouest

"Passant, si tu admires les vertus militaires;
Revère les cendres de celui que repose en ce lieu."

De la part de son amie
Delphonnaise Delva.

The third is a realistic reminder of the most recent occupation of the valley by foreign forces. Cut so deeply into the "tree of liberty" that not even the red and blue paint of the national colors with which its base is repainted annually can conceal it, and contrasting with the ornate inscription on the near-by tomb, is the following legend: 175 211

L. MARLOW
AUG. 15, 1920.
U. S. M. C.
DRUNK
AS
HELL
J. F. BROWN

[P.16 is blank]

CHAPTER I

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE

For the study of a civilization like that of Haiti, which is the result of close and continued contact between peoples with traditions as dissimilar as those of Europe and Africa, a peculiarly lively sense of time depth is needed. Yet though it has been repeatedly stated that Haiti is the child of Africa and France, even those who proclaim this emphatically fail too often to recognize the need for as detailed a knowledge as is possible of how the strands of history were woven into the fabric of Haitian cultural life. It is for this reason that before any description of the culture of Mirebalais can be attempted, not only must the names of the African tribes from which the Haitians were derived be given, but the broad characteristics of their cultures must be considered and, where possible, the classes of their population from which were derived the Negroes who were brought to Haiti. In addition, the importance of knowing the types of Frenchmen who migrated to the island during its colonial period and of understanding the modes of life they followed and presented to their slaves must be viewed as of the first order, while, finally, the manner in which these two sets of traditions were eventually forged into the structure of Haitian life as seen today must be analyzed if more than a superficial glimpse of this life is to result. 121

Writing in 1730, a Jesuit priest named Pierre François 175 562 162

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Xavier de Charlevoix[1] designated the following varieties of slaves found on the island: the *Sénégallois,* who are "of all the Negroes the best fashioned, the easiest to discipline, and the most adapted for domestic service"; the *Bambaras,* "tallest of all, but thieves"; the *Aradas,* "those who know agriculture best, but who are the proudest"; the *Congos,* "the smallest and the most apt at fishing," but who were most prone to desert their masters; the *Nagos,* "the most human"; the *Mondongos,* "the most cruel"; the *Mines,* "the most resolute, the most capricious, and the most subject to despair of themselves."

St. Mery, the importance of whose work has already been mentioned, gives a more detailed list than that of Charlevoix.[2] Of slaves who came from tribes living in the northern part of West Africa he names the *Sénégalais, Yoloffes,* and *Foules,* the *Bambaras, Quiambas, Mandingues,* and *Sosos,* as well as Negroes from the Bissagot Islands, though the last two categories are reported as but sparsely represented in the colony of Santo Domingo. Following the coast of Africa round its great bend, he speaks of the *Bouriquis* and the *Mesurades,* or *Cangas,* as deriving from the region between Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, while he notes the *Aradas,* the *Caplaous,* the *Mines,* the *Agouas,* the *Socos,* and the *Fantins,* as coming from the area between Cape Appolonia and the Volta River, an area whose tribes made substantial contributions to the Haitian slave population. Farther east, from what was known as the "slave coast" and today comprises Togoland, Dahomey, and western Nigeria, were brought the *Cotocolis,* "who inhabit the kingdom of *Coto,*" the *Popos,* the *Fidas,* and the *Ardras;* while from the interior of the west coast the *Fonds,* the *Mais,* the *Aoussas,* the *Ibos,* and the *Nagos* are mentioned. Slaves from Benin, in the Niger Delta, as well as the *Mokos* and other tribes of Calabar, were also present in Haiti, though again in small numbers. The basin of the Congo River, how-

ever, contributed not only many slaves called by the name 175
of that river, but also the *Mayombés*, the *Mousombés*, and the 162
Mondongues, though the " true Congos " — the *Franc-Congos* 567
— are listed as having been derived from Angola. As for the rest of the continent, " One does not see at all in Santo Domingo any Africans who have come from the remainder of the west coast of Africa, which ends at the Cape of Good Hope. . . ."[8]

No final answer can be given about the extent to which 175
these lists of tribal names may be regarded as valid, but the 114
unanimity with which not only Charlevoix and St. Mery, but 162
such other contemporary observers as Bryan Edwards for 567
Jamaica, the Reverend C. G. A. Oldendorps for the Virgin Islands, John G. Stedman and Jan Jacob Hartsinck for Guiana — to name only four — recorded similar African regions and similar tribal names when writing of the slaves of other parts of the New World, offers strong corroborative testimony. Moreover, the fact that every tribal designation given in the lists of Charlevoix and St. Mery can be found on present-day maps of Africa in the approximate region they had indicated confirms the accuracy of these early lists.

The characteristics of the various types of Negroes recorded 175
by Charlevoix and St. Mery are not without interest. The 162
Senegalese are described as tall and well made, and of an 157
ebony color, their noses almost as straight as those of whites, 567
their hair less tightly curled than that of other Negroes. They [142]
had the reputation of possessing a superior morality and were deemed warrior-like. St. Mery had nothing but the highest praise for the Senegalese slave.

> " He is a farmer, intelligent, good, faithful even in love, understanding, and makes an excellent domestic. Living on millet, maize, and rice, he is very sober, excellent in caring for animals, discreet, and above all taciturn, a quality sufficiently rare among the Africans and

175 162 157 567 which one does not find often enough even among civilized peoples."

Not all of the Mohammedan slaves, however, had the desirable qualities of the Senegalese. The Bambara, for example, were depicted as insolent and not always to be trusted, as the designations " those who steal turkeys " and " those who steal sheep " would seem to indicate.

The people between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were known as a hardy group prone to revolt and desertion; they were not held desirable as slaves, and thus it is not strange that few of them were found in the colony. A similar appraisal was made of the Gold Coast Negroes, for while they were described as generally well made and intelligent, they were also assessed as unreliable, deceitful, lazy, given to flattery, great consumers of food, drunkards, and wantons. And as for the Fanti and the Mina, they were spoken of as " extremely proud, waging constant warfare, capricious, and ready at any time to commit suicide."

The Negroes of the Slave Coast were favorites in Santo [142] Domingo. Their characteristic lighter skin-color, to be observed at the present time in their peculiar yellowish or reddish hue, confirms their provenience. They were thought intelligent but avaricious, and were designated as " eaters of dogs." The Ardra women, " continuous talkers," and quarrelsome, were rarely employed as domestics, since the Negroes from the region of Dahomey apparently learned French with the greatest of difficulty, so that to understand their speech was considered to be the greatest test " for those who flatter themselves that they have command of Créole."

175 162 157 567 762 The Ibos were found excellent for work in the fields, yet difficult to manage, for the slightest fault-finding or ridicule caused them to commit suicide,

> " the idea of which, far from terrifying them, seems to hold an attraction for them, for they believe in the trans-

> migration of souls. Too often it has come about that the *Ibos* of a given plantation have agreed all to hang themselves, in order to return to their country." 175 162 157 567 762

So well recognized was this tendency of the Ibo slaves to commit suicide, that they were described in Créole by the formula: "*Ibos pend' cor' a yo*—The Ibos (are those who) hang themselves." None the less, many slaves from this tribe were acquired. Their strong communal and tribal ties made it advantageous for those who owned them to obtain more of them, since newcomers "were accorded help, care, and instruction by those who had preceded them."

According to St. Mery, the Negroes most common in the colony came from the Congo coast and Angola, and were known by the generic term *Congos*. The *Franc-Congos*, who came from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, were 175 162 567 157

> "of a docility and gayety that makes them much desired. Loving song, dance, and ornaments, they make excellent domestics, while their intelligence, their facility in speaking a pure Créole, their jovial countenances without markings . . . cause people to prefer them for house-servants; they also make good laborers and good fishermen."

That the large numbers of Congo Negroes imported into Haiti have left no more of the elements of their culture in the island than are found is perhaps due to this very devotion to their masters, for a lively tradition of the present tells how, during the slave revolts, the Congo Negroes most often remained on the side of their masters and most often betrayed their fellows. 173 162 567

Not all the Negroes from the Congo area were as amiable as these just mentioned. The *Mondongos* had "the most execrable excess of eating their fellows." This quotation gains special significance because of the prominence which it has 175 162 567 266

175 162 266 567 been given through its use to substantiate the many charges of cannibalism in Haiti that have been made. Yet those who, desirous of establishing such cannibalism, quote this passage from St. Mery do not always remember to quote it in its complete context:

> "Some of these butchers of human flesh are also brought to Santo Domingo . . . where, as in Africa, they are the horror of the other Negroes, notably of the Congos, who, because of their nearness to them [in Africa], are most exposed to their cruelties." [4]

174 162 567 These are thus the tribes who were presumably the most important in the Negro ancestry of the Haitians of today. Was there any least common denominator in language which made it possible for slaves fresh from Africa to communicate with one another after their arrival in Haiti? Was there sufficient similarity in their cultures so that this might form the basis for a retention of African beliefs and behavior despite the vicissitudes of slavery? And what were the characteristics of the African civilizations of these people?

171 174 197 567 The picture of West African life, as it is commonly drawn, emphasizes the great number of small tribal groups following dissimilar modes of life, speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and worshipping different gods. In a very general sense this is not untrue. On the face of it, the number of languages that are spoken in the area from which the slaves were derived would seem to have constituted an effective barrier not alone to any concerted action on the part of slaves, but even to communication between them, especially since in many regions of the New World it was a fixed policy to separate slaves from the same tribe.

Yet behind this semblance of sharp dissimilarities lies a basic unity of language and culture in all of West Africa, so that though languages were and are mutually unintelligible, structurally and idiomatically they are much the same. This

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

THOUGH by the time of the French Revolution "the immense 175
army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the 162
face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of 567
men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mery, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the 178
Haitian peasants, this "mere handful," exerted an influence 567
out of all proportion to its size. That this should have oc- 563
curred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth,
and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must 177
be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

[History of Haiti in 17th + 18th Century; The Haitian white population]

177 cultures — namely, that the traditions and beliefs of these groups cannot withstand the impact of what is termed "civilization." What invariably seems to follow when peoples having differing customs, beliefs, and cultural heritages come into continuous contact is that both give, and each takes. What aspects of the new culture a given people will take, and what in turn they will give, must vary according to the particular historical situation under which the contact occurs. But both 178 processes do go on, and, as will be shown in the case of Haiti, though the Negroes retained much of their African culture, they also freely took over and adapted the customs and behavior of the Europeans among whom they lived.

563 Certain questions, therefore, must be asked about this white element in the population. To what extent was it a unit in its derivation and in its special customs — did its members come from a single social class of the home country, or were all elements of French society represented? What were the patterns of family life, of religion, of economic organization, of morals, which the whites presented to Negro eyes? These are matters of great significance, for one telling factor in the mingling of cultures is the type of carrier through whom contact between civilizations is effected. If, for example, European missionaries or traders or administrators on short tenure and without their families are introduced into an area, a far different picture of European life will be presented to the native from that were immigrant settlers to come among them with their wives and children; and this result, moreover, to seek finer distinctions, will show additional divergencies according to the social position of these migrants. Therefore it is necessary to consider the types of Frenchmen whose modes of living were to influence the behavior which the descendants of their slaves were to perpetuate when these had attained their freedom as individuals and their independence as a nation.

175 563 The "Corps of Adventurers" who in 1632 comprised the dominant element in the population of Haiti included four

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries — The Haitian White Population]

175 563

groups: the buccaneers "who were occupied with the hunt," the filibusters "who cruised the seas," the *habitants*, "who cultivated the land," and the bondsmen "who, for the most part, lived with the *habitants* and the buccaneers." [4] Letters of the period permit a somewhat more detailed description of the social groupings of pre-Revolutionary Haiti than that just given — a matter of some importance, since it must have been at this time that the merging of African and European civilizations was at a stage when the basic outlines of its eventual structure were being formed. The early population seems to have been made up in large part of the flotsam and jetsam of Paris; "a sort of obligatory enrollment of colonists, an enforced recruiting of emigrants from those elements of the metropolitan population judged unassimilable" [5] — those who were without means of support or under suspicion of crime, insolvent debtors, "adventurers," and those for whom emigration represented the sole existence open to them.

The *engagés*, or bondsmen, were those who, lacking the funds to pay their passage, pledged themselves to planters for a period of three years. During this time they were treated like the Negro slaves, and at the expiration of their terms were turned into the world with little enough to show for their hard labor.[6] The Protestants who migrated to Haiti were a far different type of settler, but these were few in number, and some, such as the fifty-eight who came to the island in 1687, traveled in the very ships which brought convicts condemned to hard labor for life. Ex-convicts and escaped criminals, discharged soldiers and deserters were also found. In many instances, however, persons of these types seemed by their achievements to have proved themselves not undesirable additions to the population. "I have had 300 of them whom I have placed," wrote one M. de Cussy in 1686; "they are industrious folk, and the planters are very pleased with them." One escaped criminal, who was not discovered as such until many years after he had come to the colony, was permitted to buy

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries-the Haitian white population]

175 563 his freedom for ten thousand *livres*, "which," an official report stated, "will be used to build prisons in the Cul-de-Sac." Another did so well in his new home that, though his past was known, he was never molested and died the owner of twenty-two Negro slaves.[7] Others who came to Haiti were sent there for reasons of waywardness, or because they had been involved in escapades that threatened trouble for them or their families, or because, showing no aptitude for gainful employment, their relations chose to send them to the colony rather than to be burdened with their support. Of these early colonists de Vassière says, with apparent justification: "In truth the morale and the manners of this population were what they might be supposed to have been, execrable."[8]

These categories, however, do not give the full tale of the non-Negro peoples who eventually contributed of their blood
[567] to the present-day Haitian population. In the earliest times the Spaniards sold white as well as Negro slaves to the New World, as numerous *assientos* testify. Before the time of French control of the western portion of the island, Haiti must have received her proportion of these unfortunates.[9] French women, many of them women of the streets, some mere girls who had come from convents, were imported in the early days to encourage the buccaneers and the filibusters to lead a more settled life.[10] In 1696, when the French abandoned the island of St. Croix, its inhabitants, both masters and slaves, were transported to Haiti, there to re-establish themselves on land allotted to them by the government.[11] Acadians from Newfoundland were landed at the Mole St. Nicholas in 1764, and, as has been mentioned, some of them were eventually settled in the valley of Mirebalais, there to disappear after a few years.[12] At about the same time, in accordance with a policy of increasing the white population, 2,470 Germans were brought to the island. Unlike the Acadians, these people thrived and developed an extensive cultivation of coffee, and their colony was in a healthy state at the time of the French

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Revolution.[13] St. Mery also records the importation and sale in 1730 of more than five hundred Natchez Indians from New France (Louisiana) "as well as others at a later date, both from Louisiana and Canada." [14] 175 563

A final class of settler must be mentioned, whose coming is reported to have given a better tone to the drab picture of Haitian life. This class was composed of members of the French nobility, who in their new home attempted to maintain the standards which characterized and regulated their lives in France. Unlike many of the earlier inhabitants, to whom the difficult life of the planter did not appeal, the nobles tended to continue their status as country gentlemen in their new environment, and, by establishing plantations, to reproduce in so far as was possible, their situation in France as a group of landed proprietors. As a result, there soon grew up between these planters living on their estates and the population of the cities and towns the same distinctions of caste and the same blind rivalry which, before the Revolution, separated the French country squires and the city dwellers in France itself.[15] 175 563 565 175 563 565 369

The existence of these two classes within the white population of the colony, which is commented upon by many writers of the period, must have presented to the Negro slaves strikingly different views of the life of the whites. In a manuscript of Moreau de St. Mery, at present in the archives of the Ministry of Colonies in Paris, a group of some two hundred of these gentlefolk who in 1763 lived in the region of what today is Cap-Haitien, in northern Haiti, is spoken of as that of a special class, and their existence is contrasted with that of the city folk. Living on their plantations, with the cultivation of which they were exclusively occupied, their mode of life was different from that of the inhabitants of the cities and towns, where were found dealers in wholesale produce, officers of the crown, lawyers, solicitors, and merchants. Some forty years later another writer, writing from the point of view of the

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175 planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople,
563 speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of
565 these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal
369 of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans,
[463] judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception."[16]

175 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend
364 them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for
563 extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[17] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derive.

175 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of
571 Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportu-
368 nities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even
563 for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Française, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[18] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1740.[19] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

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baths or public halls, were in operation, while in the towns 175
of Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, Leogane, Saint-Marc, and 368
Cayes, theaters were established which produced "the latest 571
plays from Paris" and attracted large audiences.[30]

Despite all this, the canker of homesickness constantly 175
gnawed at the colonists even in the towns — the feeling that a 181
stay in the colony was only for the interval needed to allow a 563
man to escape to the mother country with a fortune. On the
estates the loneliness and isolation of plantation life are commented upon repeatedly. A letter of the period, without place 175
or date, found in the family papers of the historian de Vas- 181
sière, discusses this with poignancy: 567

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> "Have pity for an existence which must be eked out far 563
> from the world of our own people. We here number five whites, my father, my mother, my two brothers, and myself, surrounded by more than two hundred slaves, the number of our negroes who are domestics alone coming almost to thirty. From morning to night, wherever we turn, their faces meet our eyes. No matter how early we awaken, they are at our bedsides, and the custom which obtains here not to make the least move without the help of one of these Negro servants brings it about not only that we live in their society the greater portion of the day, but also that they are involved in the least important events of our daily life. Should we go outside our house to the workshops, we are still subject to this strange propinquity. Add to this the fact that our conversation has almost entirely to do with the health of our slaves, their needs which must be cared for, the manner in which they are to be distributed about the estate, or their attempts at revolt, and you will come to understand that our entire life is so closely identified with that of these unfortunates that, in the end, it is the same as theirs. And despite whatever pleasure may come from that almost ab-

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● 175 solute dominance which it is given us to exercise over
181 them, what regrets do not assail us daily because of our
567 inability to have contact and correspondence with others
571 than these unfortunates, so far removed from us in point
563 of view, customs, and education." [21]

175 This letter speaks of the presence of five whites. The psycho-
567 logical state of the planter who, unmarried and alone, spent
571 his days without the companionship of a fellow-being who as
423 much as shared a common language with him may well be
563 imagined. Even where there were white overseers, the prevailing sense of caste was so strong that while these ate with the head of the estate, they did not live under the same roof, for they were subordinates and were treated as such. For his most constant companions the owner had his house-servants, unless he maintained a mulatto concubine who cooked his food and looked after his personal wants, shared his confidences, and reported to him any disaffection on the part of the Negro slaves. It is understandable that, having made his fortune, the planter did not delay his return to France, where, once back in Paris, he lived lavishly on the revenues from his estates; and letters in the Ministry of Colonies show the extent to which this phenomenon of absentee ownership characterized pre-Revolutionary Santo Domingo.[22]

175 Haiti being thought of as but an interlude in a man's life,
181 the loosening of moral tone so complained of in contemporary
563 works resulted, and with this went the many forms of display in which these colonists indulged and those other aspects of colonial custom which were so often ridiculed by European travelers of the period. The distance of Haiti from Paris, or, in a later period, the time which had elapsed since the French loss of Haiti, has, however, lent an enchantment to " Créole life " which is reflected in an idealized portrayal of this existence, much in the manner of the effusions on the graciousness and glamour of life in what is termed " the old South." [23] One

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cannot read the extended narrative of the young Comte de C***, reprinted by de Vassière, without questioning this myth of the idyllic life of the Haitian Créole, even though allowing for the disdain with which an exiled Parisian dandy of 1730 would regard the inhabitants of outlying possessions, and allowing also for the savory wit of the man, which undoubtedly led him to underscore the more diverting situations which he encountered.[24]

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Mention must be made at this point of the two great divisions of the white population which, as the colonizing period continued, were created by the distinction between those born on the island and those who had migrated there. These divisions cut across the two categories of urban and country dwellers, both of which numbered Haitian-born and native European members. At the time of the French Revolution about three quarters of the whites on the island had been born outside the colony, while of those born in the colony, women comprised the major portion.[25] Haitian-born persons were known by the designation *Créole,* which, according to a definition of the period, included all those " who have first seen the light of day in Santo Domingo " and was, as it is today, a term employed in all the West Indies and in Louisiana.[26] This designation was by no means restricted to the whites, however, for there were Créole Negroes as well as Créole whites; at the present time in Haiti a distinction is even drawn between locally grown " créole " rice and that which is imported!

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It is common knowledge that slavery not only affects those who are held in bondage, but deeply influences the master-class as well. In Haiti the role played by the institution of slavery in the formation of the character and personalities of Créole children brought up in a setting of servility, cupidity, brutality, and terror must have been of the utmost importance. The bad temper and domineering nature of Créole youths is commented on again and again by writers of the period. Owing to the unhealthy climate and the failure to

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563 maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these
567 children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they
175 were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes
155 were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified
858 so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This
571 tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> "Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude."[37]

175 Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as
563 master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled,
567 his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive
571 stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he
married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible in-
(839) fidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme
vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his
spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women.
(157) Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. "Frank,

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affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confi- 563
dent, brave, a sure friend and a good father " [28] — such are his 567
good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed 591
than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem [557]
to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites
than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves.

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[29] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[30]

Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or 175
Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly 105
furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of 563
uniformed retainers; " the supreme achievement for a Euro- 369
pean being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he 567
waits for the time when he can own them." [31] In the country,
too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not 175
the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the 563
buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or prepar- 567
ing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for nu- 105
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175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[illegible] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
175 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
105 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
563 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room
352 tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were
usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods;
substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen
remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and,
unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells
too much of the *Boucan*." [illegible]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[illegible] Whatever the fare, how-
[illegible] ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
[262] than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants
which every great establishment could boast. An account of
the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences
of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in
1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both
sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their atten-
tion to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their
clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner
elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive
sign of slavery." [illegible]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
771 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
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Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbeliev- 175
able "what indifference the people of these districts have 185
toward spiritual matters."[26] So little attention was paid to the 181
rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to 771
be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who 563
had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore [851]
never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a
bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors,
roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well
as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has
given us of a church at Cap Français,[27] and of the manner in
which the communicants conducted themselves during such
services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion
that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, [793]
too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early liber-
tines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of
such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even
this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the
establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked
its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from 17
their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What 567
patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the
way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as
officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped
on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on [181]
the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for [369]
display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today
is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain
other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in
the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians
should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the
extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be
sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which
have been published.[28]

CHAPTER III

WORKING THE AMALGAM

175 [illegible] THE FIRST slaves brought to the New World — those Negroes needed, according to the familiar account, to replace the Indians who preferred death to bondage — reached Haiti in 1510.[1] The sanguine hope of the colonists that the labor of one Negro would be worth more than that of four Indians was, however, not borne out by experience, for the work of these slaves was far from satisfactory, and their death-rate was distressingly high.[2] Yet though they were found to be useless in the gold mines, their owners were more than compensated by the discovery that they made excellent laborers in the cultivation of sugar-cane and the making of sugar. So profitable was this, indeed, that Haiti, with the rest of the West Indies, came to be known as the "sugar islands," and it is recounted how "the magnificent palaces erected by Charles V at Madrid and Toledo were built solely from the revenues obtained from the monopoly of the crown on the importation of sugar from the Island of Espagnole."[3]

175 561 During these early times the fundamental rule of slavery in Haiti was laid down: "In all that has to do with slavery, custom is everything, the law is nothing."[4] In 1518 one Zuazo, a licentiate, writing to the King, stated that the control of Negro slaves depended entirely upon the treatment accorded them. "Some of those I found on my arrival were thieves,

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while others had fled to the mountains; the first group I caused to be beaten, and cut off the ears of the others, and since then no complaint has been heard."[5] Charlevoix also tells of the brutal treatment of the early slaves; how the Negroes were given even less consideration than the Indians, since there was not only much greater difference in skin color between them and the whites than between the color of the Indians and the Europeans, but the added reason existed that

> "slavery, as far as the native Indians were concerned, was based solely on the right of the most powerful, whereas in the case of the Negroes, they having been bought and sold by their own people, it seemed that one need have less scruple in making them bear the full weight of their servitude."[6]

The rapidity with which the slave-trade grew, especially in the latter portion of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth, need not be stressed here. With the passage of the western part of the island into the hands of the French following the provisions of the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, and as a result of the picturesque but predatory activities of the buccaneers, who did much to demoralize the Spanish regime, French participation in the trade grew apace,[7] so that slightly more than a half-century later seven "companies" were engaged in carrying Negroes to the French possessions in the New World.[8] Though in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century Martinique was the best market, Haiti, because of her vast resources, came to absorb the greater part of the available slaves.[9]

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From the earliest times most of the slaves were destined for work in the fields, but some were employed as house-servants. These latter had the greatest opportunities to learn the ways of the whites and, moreover, since many of the women were mistresses of their owners, not only did a mingling of traditions and modes of life result, but a merging of

175 [illegible] [357] the blood-streams of the two races as well. And though in the custom of French Santo Domingo, as elsewhere in the New World, even a suspicion of Negro ancestry was sufficient to cut a person off from social intercourse with white society, yet these mixed-bloods were to become an important factor in establishing the patterns of Haitian Negro tradition, just as their descendants were to exert no small influence in the development of Haitian culture after the establishment of independent Haiti.

Numerous terms designated the various degrees of crossing, some of which, surviving in present-day speech, are familiar to us, such as the words "mulatto" and "quadroon." But examining Moreau de St. Mery's painstaking analysis of the various possible amounts of crossing that could be recognized, reading his speculations regarding the smallest proportion of Negro blood that could be regarded as negligible, noting how he traces Negro blood to its last vestige, as in a cross which would give one part Negro as against 8,191 parts white, a telling impression is received of the great significance of race-crossing for the Haitians of that time.[10] Such words as *sacatra*, *griffe*, *marabou*, *métif*, and *mamelouc* not only gave information as to the amount of crossing represented in the persons designated by them, but even indicated which parent, father or mother, was white and which one was wholly or partially Negro. Crossing was by no means restricted to matings between white masters and their slave women, for records show that Negro men did not fail to hold an attraction for their white mistresses. Nor did all the sharpness with which the color-line was drawn prevent actual marriages between whites and persons of color. In such instances, however, the white
[558] person was cast out from association with his fellow-Europeans, as the name applied to him, *mésallié*, sufficiently shows.[11]

Slavery cut across all these varying degrees of color, so that just as there might be free Negroes who were wholly African

in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As 175
time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually em- 563
ployed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing 567
about a continuous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis*, formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[13] and played a principal role
in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them [178]
that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[14]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the [162]
attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to
ten per cent of that of slaves.[15] In attempting to analyze the 171
manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization 562
of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a 162
consideration of those who were in the majority, the full- 174
blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

152 162 178 567 174 that commonly assumed, since the conclusion is inescapable that, if anything, the slaves formed a group whose aboriginal types showed a weighting on the upper end of the African social scale rather than an overwhelming proportion of the less desirable members of society. Such an assumption goes far in explaining how the "slave psychology" generally attributed to Negroes of the New World was anything but a real part of their inner lives, and makes as well for an understanding of the extent to which the Negroes suffered their slavery with a constantly active discontent that is rarely given proper recognition in the study of the history of the period, and to which the drive toward freedom and the traditions of their native land were kept alive despite the restraints imposed by the masters.

● 175 567 Once in the net of the slavers, however, the status of any individual mattered but little, for to the European dealers each Negro was but an added unit of cargo. All last traces of his dignity as a human being were taken from him;[18] in the grants for earlier slaving operations, and in the manifests of the ships of that time, slaves were not even invoiced as human beings, but as "pieces of the Indies" — fractions of the perfect slave, who was conceived as having a height of seven *quartas* of a little more than ten inches each. Under this practice, the stature of each slave, child or adult, having been recorded, the total length of the members of the cargo was divided by the requisite number, and thus reduced to so many of these "pieces of the Indies," the actual number of human beings in the cargo not figuring.[19]

It is unnecessary to detail the horrors of the passage to the New World, for the story has been too often told. One can but conjecture what its effect on those subjected to it must have been, especially when it is viewed as an introduction to their contact with the Europeans who were to be their masters. That the mortality on the voyage was high is well known, but death encountered while the shackled slaves passed the dan-

gerous bar of the African coast in the native canoes, which 175
often overturned in the surf, is seldom mentioned in the lit- 567
erature of the slave-trade. Yet this was perhaps as great a cause of loss of life as the hardships of the journey to the coast or even the voyage across the Atlantic.

Arrived at their destination, the slaves were given a period of rest so that they might be in the best of condition when they were placed on the market, to be inspected much as the more costly horses or heads of cattle were appraised. Sometimes the period between the voyage and their purchase was a lengthy one, since they were often held in " warehouses " for extended periods in order to regulate the market. Eventually, however, they were disposed of and, taken to the plantations, branded with the mark of the new master.[20] Induction into plantation life followed a fairly definite pattern: the new slave was first of all " introduced " to the principles of Christianity through an interpreter and then, according to his age, placed in one of the three work-groups which every plantation of any size possessed; the " great " one, composed of the most vigorous men and women; the second, to which the adolescents, the feeble, and the women who were nursing their infants were assigned; and the third, made up of children, who, under the watchful eye of an elderly woman, gathered forage. For the second and third groups the work was not too strenuous, but the members of the " great " work-group labored almost without rest except for the two hours a day allowed for meals and the few hours at night for sleep. And while conditions varied from plantation to plantation, the many contemporary accounts of the unrelenting manner in which the slaves were compelled to work at top speed testify to the harshness of the regime.[21] Small wonder that Charlevoix, contemplating the life of the slaves, wrote the moving paragraphs he composed concerning the hardships of their existence, and the slight compensations their labor afforded them.[22]

Despite the obvious fact that under such conditions the con- [178]

175 178 tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain
567 things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the
[177] slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in
dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for
example[23] — yet in other matters they could live as they had
lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by
164 164 de Vassière,[24] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoe-
[533] ing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged
some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when
the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing
songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that,
as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this
day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing
the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that
"the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of
his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes
toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their
songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all
continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[25] On the
17 other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French cus-
567 toms were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the mas-
ters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached
even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to
the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his be-
havior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his
opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[26] Not
only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[27] but we
are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were
taught these figures.[28] In the field of religion, also, the efforts
[797] of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made bap-
tism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least
in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of
the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do
not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing
Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

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the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses 567
from the faith, especially under conditions of stress.[29] 797

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of 567
slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the sup- 762
pression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the 175
French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the
list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more
usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the
slaves in line, demonstrates.[30] What is more important here
are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse
to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly
accepted explanations for this range between the desire of
the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable
property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was
one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,[31]
there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition,
the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through
suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his venge-
ance did not also figure.[32] But equally widespread in all the [669]
New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the 175
history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began 567
early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the 669
march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.[33] Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.[34] In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.[35] During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

175 567 669 and another in 1691. The object of this latter rebellion was to massacre all the whites in the district, but it was discovered before the uprising could be effective, and its leaders were executed. Still another incipient revolt in the region of Cap Français was put down in 1704.[36]

In the main, however, there were too few opportunities for united action on the part of the slaves from any considerable area to permit the idea of a general revolt to germinate and grow into action; such rebellions as occurred in the years that followed were local affairs, and were principally the result of specific abuses. [994] Yet the fear of them was always with the planters, and of this fear the *vodun* cult, characterized by St. Mery as being potentially "a terrible weapon" in the hands of the leaders of the cult, was the symbol and crystallizing agent.[37] That there was no lack of realization of the danger to the colonists from slave uprisings is made clear in letters of the period written to France; as early as 1685 M. de Cussy, reporting to the Minister of Colonies in Paris, stated: "In the Negroes we possess a formidable domestic enemy," while a hundred years later an officer of the armies of the King who was also a plantation-owner in Haiti expressed the opinion that "a colony of slaves is a city under constant threat of assault; there one walks on barrels of powder."[38]

175 567 More frequently, however, the expression of protest took the form of *marronage*, of running away to the hills, a phenomenon not restricted to Haiti, since in other regions of the New World, notably Jamaica and Dutch Guiana, the runaways maintained themselves so successfully that they were accorded their independence by formal recognition, as was also done in Haiti in 1784.[39] Figures on the extent to which slaves made off into the mountains tell the measure of their desperation; in 1720 alone, a thousand Negroes gained their freedom in this manner; in 1751, at least 3,500. Some of the leaders of these bands were men of great ability, and the depredations they engaged in caused serious losses to the planters

1: Herskovits 2-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

in the regions where they operated. The most renowned was 175
Macandal, a "Guinea" Negro, who was finally apprehended 567
and executed in 1758.[40] His name lives today in Haitian peasant tradition, where folkloristic versions of his exploits as one of the earliest of the liberators are still recounted. The pages in St. Mery which tell how the strength of the bands in the mountains behind Croix-des-Bouquets necessitated a constant augmentation of the militia on duty there, is additional evidence of the success of these runaways. The same author's description of a group operating in the parish of Jacmel, found in 1785 to number among its members men more than fifty years of age who had been born in the freedom of the mountains, shows how long the escaped Negroes were able to maintain themselves without capture.[41]

The very tradition of *marronage* was important. Psycho- 185
logically, it held out to the slaves a hope, more than ephem- 567
eral, of escaping their servitude, and in consequence al- 669
lowed them to maintain an attitude of mind that kept many of them from becoming a prey to despair. From the point of view of the growth of Haitian culture, moreover, the groups of runaway slaves offered a ready means for the continuation of African traditions and patterns of behavior. Though but [178]
few descriptions of the manner of life led by the fugitives in their mountain encampments are to be had, it is apparent that in order to maintain confidence in their own powers of resisting capture and re-enslavement the runaways guarded assiduously all memory of African belief and practice, while even in the material aspects of their existence they tended to revert to aboriginal modes of life. Finally, however, and most important for the future course of Haitian history, was the training of these runaways obtained in the ways of warfare, and the continuation of the warrior tradition among the Negroes. This is one of the reasons why in 1791, when Boukman and his followers stirred the first general slave revolt in the north, the blacks were ready; also when in the course of

175 567 669 the development of European history the French Revolution sharpened the latent antagonisms between the various classes of whites in the colony, between the whites and the free persons of color, and between masters and slaves, the way had been prepared for the operations of the great military geniuses, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, through whose leadership the freedom of Haiti was finally achieved.

175 It is not necessary here to give, even in outline, the course of Haitian history during this period of rebellion and afterwards, when Haiti was welded into a single Republic, for this has been often recounted.[48] Nor is it of importance here to continue the well-known political history of the Republic, with its many rebellions, and its wars with the Spanish portion of the island that finally resulted in the formation of the Republic of Santo Domingo; with the brief existence of the "empire" of Faustin I; and with the culmination of this history in what has been called a period of anarchy that brought about the occupation, so recently terminated, of Haiti by the American Marines.[49] Other questions, which concern the social history of independent Haiti, have been given less attention, and only tantalizing hints of their answers appear in the writings of those who have treated of the developing country. How were the impulses toward the mingling of Haitian and French aspects of culture, set in motion during the period of slavery, working out during this time? What influences dominated the scene, once the whites had been finally eliminated? What mechanisms permitted the African traditions brought by the slaves to hold their vitality? It is as through a haze that one glimpses the inner development of Haitian culture after independence; and the glimpses are the dimmer when comparison is made with the many clear and detailed descriptions of the earlier life of the island.

175 114 It is only by a close reading of the works of such travelers and foreign officials as Hanna, Mackenzie, St. John, and Hazard, that any information of this kind can be obtained. The

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympa- 175 ●
thetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little 114
to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the
fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth [567]
century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44]
that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St.
John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself [565]
in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for 175
by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and 178
were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The [423]
dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers.
The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural [595]
marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage
were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal [535]
form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still [177]
persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. 175
Vodun rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as 178
in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the 771
notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean 789

● 175 178 stew," which has continued current from the time of its publication
771 by St. John until today.[illegible] Yet African religious prac-
[789] tices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church,
175 for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained
178 largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the
779 throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establish-
795 ment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State
religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie
mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under
the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably
nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[illegible]
Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national
Church, the missionary work done during the colonial
days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome,
and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860,
which has remained in effect ever since.[illegible]

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between
1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet
the background is known, and enough can be gathered from
accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to
see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives
of the people throughout these years. With some understand-
[121] ing of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African
traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais
and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is
lived today.

585 munity. All others stay under the brush shelter which has been erected at the side of the house, where men are served the common drink of the Haitian peasant, *clairin*, raw rum. The feast, furnished by the bridegroom, includes beef, pork, and many fowls. " We do not eat badly at a wedding! " is the comment of Haitians. At the weddings of more prosperous folk there may be dancing, but no *vodun* dances are danced. "This is not a thing of *vodun*, but of the Church," is the explanation proffered.

The feasting begun, the bridal couple must submit to much speech-making. Long " lessons in morality " are pronounced by grandfathers, godfathers, and elderly male friends; in fact, anyone moved to speak expounds upon " the road to follow " for the good, the worthy life, and many a warning is given with moving examples of the fate of those who disregarded the counsel given them. The food and drinks consumed, the speech-makers silenced, and the dancers tired, the wedding guests begin to take leave, until by sundown many are gone, and soon the young couple find themselves alone.

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567 That plural marriage has existed in Haiti since the time of independence is evident from the available accounts. Little can be learned of slave matings prior to 1804, but it may be assumed that these were in the main temporary and existed at the will of the masters; and while the practice of polygyny among the slaves must have been difficult, if only because of the greater proportion of males, the African pattern seems to have had enough vitality to bring about the re-establishment of the institution as soon as slavery was abolished. Thus, writing in 1830, Makenzie notes a man " not inaptly named 'Taureau' " who " though his means were small, and his cottage still smaller . . . had a harem of no less than six wives." [illegible]
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595 St. John, some fifty years later, also remarks on the fact that

> " In the interior, a well-to-do black lives openly with several women as wives, and I have seen the patriarch

sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all 175
around in which his younger wives lived, as they could 595
not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest."[10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by [583]
name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'"[12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mire- 184
balais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the 595
Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind [177]
monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly [152]
influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

natural and those whose remedies are based principally on an 789
inherited knowledge of the curative powers of herbs and roots, are all to be gathered under the rubric of magic. For the native, however, a difference of the first order exists between a *traitement* to heal an illness, and magic employed to gain an end, protect from harm, or injure another, even though the same gods be called upon to validate the healing remedies employed to effect cures as are used to actuate a *garde* or a *wanga*.

The belief in magic figures importantly even in the early 175
writings on Haiti. Thus St. Mery says: 789

> "The Negroes believe in magic and that the power of their fetiches has followed them across the sea. . . . Little rude figures of wood or stone, representing men or animals, are for them things of supernatural power, and they call them *garde-corps*. There are a great number of Negroes who acquire absolute power over the others by this means. . . ."[2]

It is reported that in the early days the black and mulatto concubines of white Haitians often had recourse to reputedly potent charms to insure their attraction for these men and to guard themselves against their white mistresses. One Hyacinthe, a leader in the uprising of 1792, "believed that an ox-tail which he always carried in his hand had the power of preserving him from bullets; he was regarded as invulnerable."[3] And numerous citations could be given to show not only that since that day has the use of charms persisted, but that comment on this use has come to be outstanding in all descriptions of Haitian life.

To understand the various types of practitioners of magic, 789
it is necessary to refer again to the concept that any force habitually actuating evil magic may be directed toward less malevolent ends, while any benevolent supernatural power may exert itself to bring harm. Hence those who make *arrêts* to ward off evil from their clients, or *gardes* to protect them

to marry work to play, drudgery to singing, and despair to hope. In his 105
complicated world, life and death are simply different aspects of the same 181
thing. Those who die live as long as people remember them. And those who are alive in the physical sense are receptacles for the spiritual forces that exist on all sides—the echoes of the dead, the multitude of spirit beings, good and evil, and dancing and music.

What are the origins of this simple and complicated man?

The beginnings of the Haitian came with the discovery of America 175
and the establishment of slavery in the New World. When the Spanish 567
colonizers first began to organize the economy of the new colony of Hispaniola, as they called it, they attempted to enslave the indigenous Caribs to work the fields. But the Indians of Haiti found no sense and no comfort in the new system. It violated their views of life and destroyed their culture. They were proud, and they were not resilient. They did not care to pan gold for the Spaniards or to grow sugar for them. They died under the conditions of slavery, or fled into the mountains, or took to the sea in their canoes, looking for sanctuary on other islands where the Europeans had not yet settled. They left the rich earth of the Haitian valleys to the conquistadores. In less than eighteen years the new Spanish colony was dying on the vine for lack of laborers. It was then that Spain, like France, England, and Portugal, turned its eyes to Africa. There were old precedents. The Spanish and Portuguese had for many years used the African for labor. They had had intimate contact with Africans during the Moorish invasion of Iberia. And the slave trade had been an old and familiar thing even before the discovery of America.

The first Africans sent to Haiti arrived there in 1510. The precise origins of these first African immigrants to the New World are not known, but they came from somewhere along that long stretch of African coast between Senegal and Angola. It was a great crossroads in world history. As much as any other ethnic group, these Africans and those who came after them built America. They, as much as any other, turned the West Indies into a prize over which the nations of Europe fought for three hundred years. And in Haiti, as in Brazil, the United States, and other American nations, they raised moral and ethical issues for the peoples of European stock which have not been solved to our own day.

The acquisition and transportation of slaves is an old and familiar story. Slavery was an ancient institution in some parts of Africa. Some of the wars between kingdoms were, in part at least, huge slave raids. In other wars, the taking of slaves was only incidental. But the selling of these human chattels to European merchants came as easily to African chieftains as it did to Arab entrepreneurs. Often they were merely selling off

175 567 "surplus" stock. The African's motives sometimes were political rather then mercenary—to weaken and disperse unfriendly neighboring tribes. Occasionally, members of a royal family, possible contenders for tribal power and all the prerogatives that went along with it, were "exiled" in this extremely effective and final way. Although Africans were the victims of this monstrous commerce, it is clear that without the participation and coöperation of other Africans the slave trade as it existed in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries would not have been possible. The African, along with the Asian and the European, shares the guilt for the indecencies and degradation that grow out of human barter.

The voyage to the New World was at best horrible and inhuman. Nothing that can be said about the manner in which the captains of the slavers attempted to care for their cargoes can change the picture. The slaves suffered from thirst, disease, hunger, seasickness, and impersonal brutality. The anxiety and dread which these captives must have suffered in anticipation of things to come are difficult to imagine. A strange, unfamiliar world awaited them across an ocean larger than Africa itself. Some slaves killed themselves. Others who had survived long overland marches died of exhaustion or disease aboard the slave vessels. And many a slaver had to report in its log that a number of chained males, taking advantage of a brief spell on the upper decks, had leaped into the sea.

But among those who reached port in the New World there was a fierce determination to survive. The history of African slavery in the Americas is full of accounts of resistance and revolt against the European masters. The shipwrecked slaves who took over the Island of St. Vincent and came to be known as the Black Caribs, the Ashanti who revolted and vanquished the Dutch armed forces in Surinam, the Maroons of Jamaica, and the ex-slaves of Haiti who destroyed Napoleon's armies, all bear witness to the unquenched spirit of those millions of Africans exiled from their own land.

175 162 567 Whereas the Indians of Haiti were not resilient, the Africans were. More and more slaves were poured into Hispaniola. By the eighteenth century the slave population represented countless tribes and kingdoms of West Africa. There were Senegalese, Foulas, Poulards, Sosos, Bambarras, Kiambaras, Mandingos, and Yolofs from northwest Africa. There were Aradas, Mahis, Haoussas, Ibos, Anagos or Yorubas, Bini, Takwas, Fidas, Amines, Fantis, Agouas, Sobos, Limbas, and Adjas from the coast and interior of the great bulge of Africa. From Angola and the Congo basin came the Solongos, the Mayombés, the Mousombés, the Moundongues, the Bumbas, the Kangas, and others. Although there is no official record, Haitians themselves say that there were also those tall

people known as the Jangheys, or Dinkas, from the region of the Upper 175
Nile, and Bagandas from Uganda.[1] A few proper names that have sur- 162
vived, such as Ras Médé, suggest that there may have been men from 567
Ethiopia among them. Old slavers' records show that numerous shipments were made from Madagascar and Mozambique on the East African coast.[2]

These transplanted people came from all classes and stations of life. Some were criminals condemned and sold by their own tribesmen; others were prisoners captured in intertribal raids or by Arab slave hunts. There were men of royal blood among them, as well as artisans and tribal scholars. The slave cargoes included leaf doctors, bards, musicians, wood carvers, metalworkers, drum makers, boatbuilders, hunters, and farmers.

In Haiti they were thrown together into a common mold. Shoulder to shoulder in the plantation fields were Bambarras, Anagos, Takwas, and Bumbas—peoples with different backgrounds, different languages, different legends, and different traditions. There were Moslems and so-called pagans, herdsmen and river-boatmen. Each of them brought something of his past and unwittingly poured it into the new amalgam that was to be the Haitian.

And into this amalgam flowed some of the literature, the traditions, the 17
religious thoughts, and the superstitions of Europe. Under Spanish, 567
French, and English rulers the slaves were constantly subjected to ways and ideas that were new to them. They absorbed and digested, and out of the diverse and even contradictory elements they worked out new patterns of life and thinking. This was the strength and resiliency of the West African in the New World. His capacity for adaptation and for remembering what was valuable to him and forgetting what had ceased to be useful preserved his spirit and his pride.

Among the things that were lost in this vast process of adaptation were the traditions of wood carving, bronze and brass casting, and weaving. Remembered, however, were music, dancing, games, religious beliefs, concepts of nature and the supernatural, folk tales, and legends. It was the outward, material things that were abandoned, and the inward, nonmaterial things that tended to survive.

The slave system itself was largely responsible for the loss of special arts and skills. Craftsmen with specialized knowledge in metalwork were set to repairing wagons and hoes, or they simply wielded hoes in the fields. Wood carvers found no patrons to encourage them to carve images and stools. The colonial emphasis was on mass production of sugar. Other things were valueless. There was little leisure or incentive for the slave to follow his artistic aptitudes.

[1] [The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

[2] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 349--Analyst]

[P. 8]

2. Man and the Universe: Vodoun

175 177 771 When the African slaves stepped ashore in the New World they brought with them highly developed religious beliefs and attitudes toward life. But Africa was a continent of many cultures and nations, and its belief systems varied. The Congo African did not have the same view of the natural and supernatural as the Senegalese, for example; and even neighboring peoples such as the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Mahis did not have common religious traditions. Yet in the strange new land that was Haiti, the common elements in their religious beliefs were accented. In time a new composite religious system emerged. It was called Vodoun.

175 167 177 771 The preponderance of Africans in Haiti came from the region of Dahomey, Togoland, Nigeria, and the Congo River basin. Among them the Dahomeans were the most numerous, and it was they who provided the framework for the Afro-Haitian religious system.

192 The word Vodoun itself is Dahomean in origin. Among the Fon-speaking people of West Africa it signified "spirit," or "deity." In Haiti the word came to be applied in a general sense to all the activities of cult life, from the ritual of the "temple" to the songs and dances, though in some old songs it still applies specifically to the idea of a supernatural spirit. However, the Congo word *loa* came to be used to designate the deities.[a]

771 794 177 In a literal sense, Vodoun in Haiti consists of the rites, beliefs, and practices of the Vodoun cult, built around the similar religious systems of the Dahomeans and the Nagos. In a wider sense it applies to similar but distinct ritual activities of other cults. The Ibo-Kanga rites and dances are in a specific sense "not quite" Vodoun. The rites in the Congo-Guinée cult group—made up of Congo, Bambarra, "Guinée," and miscellaneous elements—have separate practices and deities of their own, and are often regarded as not Vodoun at all. Yet the term Vodoun is used in a generic sense to include all these rites, and examination of the beliefs and activities of these cult groups shows that they have drawn in considerable measure upon a common inheritance.

[a] [See Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 7. Cf P. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

782 In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise [771] of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct con- [776] tact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

771 179 776 Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

179 789 771 776 There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbouluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun 771 783 779 rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane*, or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While 179 the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings 175 elements of its theology into the houmfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Chris- [659] tophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

175 653 793 Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[1] [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, category 116. -- Analyst]

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ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion 793
but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes: [659]

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.*

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that 175
Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church. 659

The role of the prèt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 175
1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who 793
apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

The prèt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, 793
though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand 177
or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability [554]
to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

The prèt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, 793
reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and 78
"baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the loa themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prèt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prèt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests [184]
—even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

000
remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President 776
Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reënactment of the original march. 788
There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé 643
mystères—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé 175
dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

SERVICE FOR THE HOUNSI BOSSALE

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun 346
priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was 796
situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it 787
were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for
another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a 793
black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he neverthe- 794
less commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other partici- 796
pants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.
787

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

In certain communities there

is some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Chariopié band remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *mait'* Rara, also called *major* or *président*, who assumes the organizational responsibilities for the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the mait' Rara actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the mait' Rara himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the roi Lwalwadi, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The mait' Rara has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food. 541 575 624

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé sorti* (pay to go) money. After receiving its payé sorti, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a beribboned basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house. 541 575 175 ●

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old tradition. Aubin reported that the roi Lwalwadi dates from the time of the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first roi Lwalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture. 575 175 535

The roi Lwalwadi is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed down within the family from rois of other years. Much care is given to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet 575 535 [292]

[1] [Aubin, En Haiti, p. 42. Cf p. 351, Category 116.--Analyst]

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 181
1828, for example: 461

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he [464]
never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other
countries."[1]

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments 175
about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of 433
St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had 648
made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country [257]
was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and [312]
carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured [488]
water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had [527]
exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century [439]
after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, 175
but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against 461
slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had 462
performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, 423
unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. 567
To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti 175
was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it 178
is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been 311
wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven [161]
out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. [248]
The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[1] [Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 362.
Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

In the early

175 178 311 [643 556] years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he controlled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 648 181 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 423 311 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 595 178 593 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. [999] It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[3] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[4] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the [581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

3, 4 [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. -- Analyst]

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to 423
hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne 691
l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had 511
it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances 178
of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a 423
few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the 361
family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a 166
group. There was a natural family community which shared a common [596]
social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and [621]
the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, 166
returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family 464
reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *mouin grangou* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements
continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend 167
toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Re- 195 ●
public, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth
that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by [648]

167 175 [648] a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country.[a] But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 [842] Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries [311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to [47] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 167 461 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their [178] lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

476 241 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carrè* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée*; the workers are

[a] [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies 175
knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thou- 178
sands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the 326
roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no 648
matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the
enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not
altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the
Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual ob-
jects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in 326
the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, 778
made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to 178
standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both [184]
single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords [534]
and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled [171]
iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized [776]
or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are
nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past
decade.[a]

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic 322
decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is 531
on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing
from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa.
The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in
which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly
utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, 323
uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of
glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari 524
gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, 322
without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in ap- 501
pearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that 531
esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or [517]
alfor, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm [482]
and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Dec- [285]
orated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta [386]
dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some com- 531
munities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted 353
with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar [184]
bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes
with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[a] [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

[p. 126]

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

177 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the
178 loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle
535 for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances
178 they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a French-
175 man born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

[P.148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

*533 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier sub-
538 jects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that
626 the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward
178 the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of
their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised
in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and
social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the
[569) nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep
democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters
*533 and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not
538 only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well.
538 They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for
626 political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented
178 others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed
666 out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing
his physical deformities.

*533 Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault.
538 Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political
[666] aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his
opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and
[173] their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten
or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of
the recollections go back more than a century.

●175 History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard
442 aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new
[643] constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

presidents, and emphatically declared the army to be within and under the law. 175 642

The new President, finding his office without the prerogatives he had 175
expected it to have, openly complained of the restraints imposed on him 643
by the new constitution. He broke campaign promises he had made to 669
the peasants in the south and stirred up antagonisms on every side.
Finally, while he was on a military expedition in the Spanish part of
the island, revolution broke out at home. His army was beaten by the [648]
Dominicans, too, which completely shattered his morale. He fled by ship
to Jamaica, the traditional refuge of outgoing Haitian presidents. In 175.
memory of his administration the peasants sang: 643
669
533*
539*

Rivière Président gainyain zyeux vairon!
Li dit l'ap piyé l'armé Bélanton!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Yo voyé Lambam depuis Lowinsor!

La Constitution cé trouva Colombe
Quand yo voit pays soufri trop misère!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Pou' fai sang coulé pou' rangé pays!

Colonel Déro soldat Diplaro
Marché fanfaron comme un grand fanin!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Pagnol chasse li, li couri con chien qui prend frai charogne!

President Rivière was cross-eyed!
He said that he was going to pillage Bélanton's army!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
They sent everyone from Lowinsor to Lambam!

The Constitution was founded by Columbus
When the country suffered too much misery!
He said he would do like Henry [Christophe]!
He said he would do like Henry!
He said he would do like Henry!
Make blood run to poison the countryside!

● 175 From Colonel Déro to Private Diplare,
643 They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
669 He thought that he was king!
661 He thought that he was king!
*533 He thought that he was king!
*539 The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

175 Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-
577 au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télé-
666 maque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace,
626 and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing: *[533]
*[539]

Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdez le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous fera fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year, [669] when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled! *[539]
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

175. The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N.
643 Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

For some time the President, who was sixty-nine years old, had not been in good 175
health, and disregarding the friendly warning of those who were interested in his 643
welfare he refused to give up his hard work and to take the rest of which he was in sore need. Against the advice of his doctor he decided to undertake a long journey to Jacmel. He started on the 24th of March, 1896, at three o'clock in the morning, but before he even had time to leave Port-au-Prince, he fell from his horse dead in a fit of apoplexy, at a short distance from the executive mansion.[1]A

The legend of Hippolyte's death passed on in song is not nearly so 533*
dispassionate. It is told that Hippolyte was going out on a drastic punitive 539*
trip to Jacmel, where there were rumblings of political opposition and 173
revolution. Among other things, the President was going to seize the 643
powerful Vodoun priest Mérisier, regarded as a powerful force in the opposition. Hippolyte also had sworn to reduce Jacmel to ashes and wipe out the entire population except one male and one female to repopulate the land. As he prepared to leave on his mission, his wife and his son stood by the door to see him off.

Li lévé Mardi bon matin, Li fai sèlé cheval à li. En montant su cheval li, Panama li sorti tombé.	He arose early on Tuesday morning, He saddled his horse. As he climbed on his horse, His hat came off and fell.
L'Thérisma rélé "Papa," Li dit li, "Papa à moin, Panama ou sorti tombé, Cé déjà youn mauvais signal."	L'Thérisma * called out, "Papa!" He said to him, "Father, Your hat has come off and fallen. That is already a bad omen."
Li réponde li, "Pitit à moin, Moin déjà voyé l'armée déhors, L'armée moin déjà nan portaille. Y faudra que moin parti."	He replied to him, "My child, I have already sent the army ahead, My army is already at the city gate, I have to go."
Arrivé nan Pont Gentil, Li tombé sans connaissance. Yo voyé rélé Doctor Jules, "Vin sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Arrived at Pont Gentil, He fell unconscious. They sent for Dr. Jules, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."
Doctor Jules tombé à genoux, Li rélé Manman Ste Anne, Li rélé St. Augustin, "Vini sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Dr. Jules fell on his knees, He called Mother St. Anne, He called St. Augustin, "Come to save Florvil Gélin!"
Ste Anne dit, "Li faut mouri." St. Augustin dit, "Li faut mouri." Li rélé St. Jacques Majeur "Vini sauver Florvil Gélin!"	St. Anne said, "He has to die." St. Augustin said, "He has to die." He called St. Jacques Majeur, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."

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* Hippolyte's son.

[1]A [Léger, Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors. Cf p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

173 643.

A la youn président, 533*
C'est Tirésias Augustin Simon Sam. 539*
Si tout té con ça,
Haiti ta fini! [Ex. 111]

There was a president,
He was Tirésias Augustin Simon Sam.
If they were all like him,
Haiti would be finished!

In 1902 General Nord Alexis became the chief executive of Haiti. His 175 ● abilities and accomplishments are still being debated, but he appears to 643 have been a rather lovable old man whom everyone called by the affectionate term Uncle. His administration was fairly stable and prosperous—as prosperity is known in Haiti—and in large measure peaceful. When his election was confirmed, the people were convinced that the nation was in for a period of law and order, and that the constant threat of cacos and brigandage would come to an end. One of the election-year songs goes: [533]* [539]*

Nous crions vive, c'est pou' l'armé du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Nous crions vive, c'est pou' soldats du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Tintin cila, tintin cila, tintin cila va fini!
Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun c'est pou' nous! [Ex. 112]

We cry long live Nord's army!
The chaos will be ended!
We cry long live Nord's soldiers!
The chaos will be ended!
The chaos, the chaos, the chaos will be ended!
Bassin Vodoun,* Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun is for us!

One of the serious problems confronting Nord Alexis after his election was that of a disappearing national currency. Haitian paper money 175 643 652 was circulating elsewhere in the West Indies and in South America and was becoming increasingly scarce in Haiti itself. Nord Alexis called in all the old currency and issued new, with the happy result that large quantities of money were again seen in the Republic. The common people who made the songs seem to have been very grateful: [533]* [539]*

Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous monné, ou ba nous papier!
Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous monné, ou ba nous papier!

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*Probably a place name.

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Nous pas mandé ou anyien!
Nous pas mandé l'a'gent enco'!
Papa Nord ça nous ta mandé oh chef,
C'est bamboche nous mandé oui! [Ex. 113]

Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
We don't ask you for anything more!
We don't ask you again for money!
Papa Nord, only one thing we are going to ask you, chief,
It is a big celebration we ask for!

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The president's wife, Çéçé, seems to have been very proud of him and very sure of his talents. When the army bugles blow a general assembly call, they are supposed to be saying:

Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit la quitté pour voir l'heure li vlé!
Çéçé té dit Tonton Nord grand moune nan tout corps li! [Ex. 114]

Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said he will quit his office whenever he sees fit!
Çéçé said Uncle Nord is a thoroughly fine man!

Another bugle call, with words attributed to Nord's wife, contains a note of complaint:

Çéçé said *awillé!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said if you don't have any money you can't have a woman!
Çéçé said *awillé!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said we are working our guts out!
Çéçé said *awillé!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is president!

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Çéçé was not the only one in Haiti who had confidence in Nord's staying power. One popular song of the period goes:

Alexis Nord Papa,
Bondieu qui metté ou là!
Connaissé li pa
Qui vlé ba ou traka!

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Alexis Nord, c'est bon Papa!
Ou pas metté ou pas manyien!
Pinga ou manyien, pinga ou manyien!
Pinga ou manyien Alexis Nord! [Ex. 115]

Alexis Nord, Papa,
It is God who put you there!
Take care of those
Who wish to make trouble for you!

Alexis Nord is a good papa!
You didn't put him there, you can't take him away!
Don't try to remove him, don't try to remove him!
Don't try to remove Alexis Nord!

Nord Alexis remained as president until 1909. He was then more than eighty years old, and he planned to turn the government over to General Jean-Gilles, who would carry on the policies of the administration. But Antoine Simon, an assembly delegate from the south, had other plans. He marched on Port-au-Prince with an army of three hundred cacos, who sang: 175 643 669 [533]* [539]*

Tonton oh cher, Antoine pas nan badine oh!
L'apprend l'armée du sud, cher,
L'a fai ou marché zigzag!
Débar débar débar!
Nèg' Nord mandé fusil!
Débar débar débar!
Nèg' Nord mandé [illegible]!

Dear Uncle, Antoine is not joking!
He brings the army of the south, my friend,
He will make you go zigzag.
Débar débar débar! *
Nord's men are asking for guns!
Débar débar débar!
Nord's men are asking for a lesson!

After Nord Alexis had vacated the palace and embarked for Jamaica, Antoine Simon became president. Historians often refer to the period that followed as the "Epoch of Ephemeral Presidents." Simon was not in the palace long before a man named Cincinnatus Leconte was successfully stirring up a new caco movement in the north, and people were singing: [533]* [539]*

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* Probably "[illegible]."

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Antoine Simon prend ou pou' allé!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Leconte Gonaives? [Ex. 116]

Antoine Simon, you'd better leave!
Haven't you heard Leconte's army is at Gonaives?

In August, 1912, Leconte marched on the capital, and Antoine Simon sailed for Jamaica. General Leconte was duly elected to the presidency; but less than a year after he took office a terrific explosion wrecked the palace, killing Leconte, his son, and a number of militia. It was believed by many that this disaster was an act of vengeance by Antoine Simon:

Cloches sonnin, m'mandé ça qui gainyain
C'est Chapuzette qui débandé encore.
Marlbarous nan li vini encore,
Ça'l vin' chaché, li vin' mandé revanche.

Nan Ouanaminthe fusil pas té tiré,
Qui raison ça pou' yo té fait pillage?
Bourriques, mulet' jusqu'à feuilles tôle, Chapuzette,
Tout ça passé au prix de trois centimes.

Machettes Leconte pis raide passé jalap,
C'est avec ça Chapuzette bai médicine.
Si ou vlé connd comment bai "vent-main-ou,"
Mandé Oreste avec Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon té dit avant'l parti,
Li ta va quitté yon bombe nan mitan yo.
Lè l'éclaté, lè-à la va Kingston,
La maré rein'l pou'l ri peuple souvrain.

Aux Cayes du Fond m'tendé Maquet Simon,
Nan Léogane m'tendé Maquet Dunpinet.
Lè nou rivé ou wé ça qui gainyain,
Cousin courri cousin, Antoine viré nou don.

REFRAIN

Honneur à Chapuzette, St. Juste avec Delphin,
Ducasse et Cervèrière, vive Cincinnatus.

The bells ring, I ask what is going on?
It is Chapuzette now who has revolted.
But Marlborough he comes again,
What he is looking for is revenge.

In Ouanaminthe the guns are quiet,
What was the reason for this pillage?
They have carried off the donkeys, mules, and even the iron roofing,
Everything that was worth more than three centimes.

Leconte's soldiers are stronger than a *jalap*,* 195●
It is with them that Chapuzette gives medicine. 643
If you want to know how to give the "stomach-hand-over" † 669
Ask Oreste and Antoine Simon. 533*
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Antoine Simon said before he left
That he would leave a bomb in the middle of the palace.
When it went off he was already in Kingston.
He will pay for laughing at a sovereign people.

In Aux Cayes du Fond, I heard of the Mayou Simon,
In Léogane I heard of the Mayou Dauphin:
When we arrive there we'll see what will happen.
Bowl covers bowl,‡ Antoine will turn over on his back.

REFRAIN

Honor to Chapuzette, St. Juste and Delphin,
Ducoup and Carvoisier, long live Cincinnatus.

Two more presidents—Tancrede Auguste and Michele Oreste—divided the next eighteen months between them. Two caco movements to remove Oreste started simultaneously, one under the leadership of Davilmar Théodore, the other under the Zamor brothers, Charles and Oreste. The Zamor cacos first chased Théodore's army into the mountains and then marched on the capital. Oreste Zamor was elected to the presidency on a reform program, which quickly evaporated into thin air. One song describes the arrival of the President's brother Charles and his "Réform" at the gates of Port-au-Prince, where a crowd of enthusiasts had gathered: [868]

Attention la Réform c'est jeunes gens Port-au-Prince,
C'est jeunes gens Port-au-Prince, la Réform viré dos ba yo.
Yo lévé Mardi bon matin, l'habillé tout en blanc,
L'habillé tout en blanc pou' y'al contré Charles Zamor.
Al entrée Port-au-Prince la Réform déboudé,
La Réform déboudé, la Réform viré dos ba yo.

Hail the Reform! It is the young men of Port-au-Prince,
The young men of Port-au-Prince, and the Reform turns its back on them.
They arose early Tuesday morning, dressed all in white,
They dressed all in white to meet Charles Zamor.
At the gates of Port-au-Prince the Reform reversed itself,
The Reform reversed itself and turned its back on them.

The Zamors and the reform administration held the palace less than nine months before Davilmar Théodore's cacos were marching on the capital singing the song that other presidents had heard.

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* A violent purgative.
† That is, upset stomach, hand on the [illegible]
‡ That is, force replies to force.

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Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Davilmar entré pou' Gonaives?

Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Haven't you heard Davilmar's army has entered Gonaives?

Gonaives seems to have been the crucial point for invading armies from the north. Whenever revolutionary troops entered this town, the president holding office prepared to leave. True to the tradition, the Zamors sailed for a foreign shore, and Davilmar Théodore became the new executive. Although his tenure was to last only three months, there was much excitement when he entered the capital:

A la théâtre, à la bamboche!
Pou' djéle musique à droit à gauche!
La ville embarrassée ça qui gainnain,
C'est Davilmar kapé monté!
Davilmar, dur, dur!
Manchette caco pas sou betise!
Papa Da dur, dur!
Manchette Leconte pas sou betise!
Davilmar, dur, dur!

Celebrations and dancing!
Tooting horns to right and left!
The city is in an uproar,
It is Davilmar who is coming in!
Davilmar, hard, hard!
The cacos were nothing to laugh at!
Papa Da is hard, hard!
Leconte's army was nothing to laugh at!
Davilmar is hard, hard!

175 648 [862] In 1915 came the United States intervention in Haiti, with the prime objective of freezing out German commercial and political interests. A president named Guillaume Sam had assassinated his political enemies in the prison at Port-au-Prince and had, in turn, been dragged out of the French consulate and killed. The benefits of the American occupation of Haiti are hotly debated to this day, though it is about thirty years since the United States military forces were withdrawn. Some Haitians think the occupation was a good lesson in politics, and that Haiti benefited in many ways. Others continue to look upon it as an overt expression of American diplomacy by force. One of the early assignments of the U.S. Marines in Haiti was the destruction of the

roaming bands of cacos, generally regarded as bandit elements. Caco 175
chiefs were imprisoned or killed as outlaws, though much of their 648
activity was directed against the American occupation rather than the
civil government. Many of the injustices of the occupation were the
result of inadequate understanding of the Haitian people and their way
of life. There was much unspoken bitterness against the occupation 175
forces, and in some popular songs the Marines were referred to by the 648
peaceful peasantry as "cacos in khaki." During President Borno's ad- 533*
ministration the people in the north were singing: 537*
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Grand Prevost ou pas tendé cacos Bord Bosteille?
Grand Prevost n'allé wè cacos Bord Bosteille!
Ala kilé nous dé nations:
Américains dévant, cacos derrière!

Grand Prevost, didn't you hear the cacos are at the Bottle Gate?
Grand Prevost, we are going to see the cacos at the Bottle Gate!
Now we have two species:
The Americans are the worst, the cacos come second!

When President Borno's tenure of office came to an end, it was felt 175
in some quarters that Madame Borno was taking the prospective change 643
of residence very hard: [illegible]
[illegible]
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Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
Ou té tou conné palais a parti pou' ou!
Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
Ou té tou conné yun jour pou' ou lâché!

Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
You always knew one day you would have to leave the palace!
Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
You always knew one day you'd have to give it up!

In 1930 Sténio Vincent came into office. He was a generally un- 175
popular executive who managed to hold on to the presidency by sup- 643
pressing the political opposition. When he was elected, the progressives 669
were hopeful, and his supporters were singing: "Sténio Vincent bon garçon." But public sentiment shifted. Times were hard for the Haitian people during the Vincent administration. The darker citizens felt Vincent was "too light" to have their interests at heart. They were violently aroused, too, by his gingerly handling of the massacre of Haitians in the Dominican Republic in 1937. During his administration there were a number of abortive caco demonstrations and an unsuccessful revolt of high-ranking army officers. But in the early days a Meringue

But in the early days the Meringue
piece called "Merci Papa Vincent" was very popular. According to the song, the noteworthy achievement of the President was the law he sponsored to drive the "Syrians" out of the retail trades:

Nous connai moune qui ainmé people là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous connai moune qui ainmé people là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous connai moune qui ainmé people là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous connai moune qui ainmé people,
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!

Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!

We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

This song soon became the "official" musical theme of the President and was heard in the carnival festivities, at salon dances, and at military functions. But as discontent with Vincent grew, less adulatory versions

of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. 175 178
One rendition (as translated) went: 643 533* 539*

We know the man who loves the people,
He is Sténio Vincent!
Who made my wife leave me to go to her *family?*
He is Président Vincent!
Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
He is Président Vincent!
Who is the man who made my house fall down?
He is Président Vincent!
Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1950, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a 175
new public works program which provided employment for a good 643
many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of 533*
the period went: 539* [653]

Président Estimé vaillé, oh!
Quemblé pays yà pas lagué oh!
C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin *président!*
C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président cila!
Quemblé pays yà pas lagué oh!
Port-au-Prince oh tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

President Estimé *vaillé*, oh!
Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered [669]
on, but the name of the protagonist was changed.

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good 643
or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic 533*
deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people.

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president- [539]*
elect on the way to the palace:

Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernement!

[p. 349]

Notes

CHAPTER 1: *The Making of the Haitian (pp. 1–7)* ooo

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data [113]
found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: [175]
20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from [162]
"Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those [567]
shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

CHAPTER 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun (pp. 8–18)*

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors [113]
are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes [193]
and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' [787]
but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*." [171]

[3]Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 129; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-so* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-so* was re- [171]
garded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some [194]
instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57–59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for [114]
Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of [78]
this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period [114]
as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the [174]
field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were [175]
already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit [771]
evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian [193]
soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

CHAPTER 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains (pp. 19–29)*

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) 776
usage. The term *hounsit*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root 192

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 very favorable reception by Haitian scholars and intellectuals. As its
author and others have pointed out, few countries in modern times
have received as bad a press at the hands of foreign observers as Haiti.
105 A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led,
independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly
108 for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands
have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned on their French
masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty.
114 But too little scholarship has since been invested, as Leyburn invested
it, in delineating the national and international forces which have
operated to keep Haiti poor and backward. Nor has contemporary
research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social
history of Haiti and that of her more colonial neighbors in the Caribbean area. Leyburn's work enhanced the possibilities for such comparisons and drew some morals which Haiti's detractors often ignore;
but in making his case, the author carefully avoids lapsing into romanticism, or into the inaccuracy born of uncritical sympathy.

The book was published as the final steps were being taken to end
● 175 the official United States presence in Haiti. The occupation had be-
649 gun in 1915, ostensibly to restore order in a situation marked by
[652] political chaos. Haitian defaulting on debts to the French and Germans had raised the specter of foreign—that is, European—occupation, which created considerable North American anxiety; and there
were large Haitian debts outstanding to United States banks as well.
When the United States decided to move militarily, the abstract issue
of justice was ignored, to be raised for contemplation only after the
occupation itself was a fact. Military occupation continued for nineteen years, and the complete termination of United States controls
over the national affairs of Haiti did not come until 1946, long after
Leyburn's book had appeared. Twenty-five years have now elapsed
since Leyburn wrote, and the events of these years are relevant to any
retrospective view of the author's interpretations.

175 Much, indeed, has happened in Haiti since 1941: the United States
105 withdrawal and the fading of the effects, both good and bad, of the
occupation; the positive economic consequences for Haiti of World

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966

SV3 Haiti SV3

War II and its aftermath, and the subsequent dissipation of those 175
gains; the "social revolution" of January 1946, ushering in the Estimé 105
regime; the boom in the arts and tourism, and their later contractions; the rise and subsequent fall of the Magloire government (1950-56), and the uneasy interregnum that followed it; and finally, the growth of the Duvalier monolith.

Over the span of those years, social science literature on Haiti has 114
increased significantly, and outsiders, as well as the Haitians them- 121
selves, can now know much more about the country and its people. But some of the most important questions raised by Leyburn's book remain substantially unanswered. *The Haitian People* is a classic because its author phrased so well the major issues in the growth of Haitian national institutions, and no subsequent work is likely to supplant it in this regard. But its value has been heightened over the years by the lack of any equally penetrating analysis dealing with the period since 1941 or specifying the relative importance of various institutional forces in the contemporary structure of Haitian society. Thus, for instance, much too little is known of the culture and social organization of Haiti's predominantly rural population, in spite of considerable anthropological research since 1941. More detailed studies of the rural economy are particularly necessary, both to assess developmental possibilities and to understand better the relationship of rural sectors to the national economy. Sociological and economic analyses of folk religion—*vodoun*—are wanting, even though psychological and descriptive studies of this religion have appeared in large numbers. The general conceptual problem of community definition, structure, and organization, which has long plagued students in the Caribbean area, has been barely raised in the case of rural Haiti. Finally, our understanding of Haitian class structure, both local and national, and its corollaries in economic, political, and social institutions, is still slight. Here the need for more research seems particularly acute, since no adequate grasp of the nature of Haitian society at large will be possible until the fit of the rural sectors with the national class structure is better known. On this understanding, among others, may hinge the likelihood of success of any future developmental effort in Haiti.

It was with Haiti as a nation that Leyburn dealt in his book, and his analysis of national institutions and social structure excited more comment and reflection within Haiti itself than any other part of his

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966

SV3 Haiti SV3

Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the na- 114
ture and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the 565
elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents 648
elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned mem- 643
bers of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North 175
Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, 701
it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with 565
its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps,
made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerat- 114
ed *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had 175
this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of 643
Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only 669
eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and 565
seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States oc- 701
cupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

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Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

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The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

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● 175 American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century,
648 Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph
186 over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by
French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In ef-
[illegible] fect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to
rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

114 As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity
culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it
-829 politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became
-175 an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language
871 began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy
212 through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, em-
191 phasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as
874 expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore
their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was
555 French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of
643 two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

175 Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cul-
-829 tural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian in-
tellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation
186 and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new 829
feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa. 186

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an im- 175
portant means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"— 829
picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly 814
self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic 175
structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the na- 433
tional cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class 565
structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have 647
occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 555
1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

At the same time, as the Comhaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 114
179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge 175
in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of 565
such a group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring.

175 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment,
565 were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored
strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons
were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance,
in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed
it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example
of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for
the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today,
if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to
[467] matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends,
since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the
[362] construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable
to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their
reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis
imputed to Haitian social structure.

175 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office
669 illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To
643 power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief
159 executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé
before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity
643 of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so
sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman.
[433] Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside
and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time
in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations 175
(bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commod- 643
ities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by for- [433]
eigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain at- 175
tempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was 643
brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. 669
The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of 665
François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

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* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by Manigat, 1964, to which this interpretation owes much. 14

175 643 66 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoiciste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 642 66 701 643 The Duvalier regime, beyond any doubt, has added something new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 642 648 643 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any preceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in 175
spite of internal disaffection, sometime hostile United States propa- 642
ganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, 648
is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of 643
this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to
work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the
Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct 175
assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also 648
of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was 433
notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic 114
structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial 744
changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the 20
areas of health and health services, communications, government ad- 871
ministration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée la- 489
bor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary
guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institu- 175
tionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political 648
mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was 701
transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. 643
Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, 669
and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, 625
turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-
making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an
agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect
of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United
States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter
significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian
governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken
full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its
leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the
political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government
and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to 175
consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political 643
strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. 66
The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince,
had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum;
its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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•175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
795 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the
downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

176 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
701 apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
702 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
66 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened
Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an ex-
tremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its mem-
bers wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism
against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

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* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." 642 The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear [114] these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

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Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from 175
each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. 171
Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely 648
populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike [161] most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges [177] of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they [563] were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

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The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing 175
with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never 171
able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. 167 Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

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* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1961:243–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, 177
occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly 179
characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere.
Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently 177
synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the 174
persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this 563
colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large
populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of
slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but
was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the
plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in 171
some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were 563
substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early 174
cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped
by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of
Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any 174
sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other so- 177
cieties of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French
masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, 178
colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately, independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed 175
change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeo- 177
man way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United
States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external de- 178
velopments than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard, 171
its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

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175 same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in
177 the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of
178 unusual firmness and persistence.

171 This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic
productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued
433 convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth
321 have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in
161 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses,
565 though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable
-171 to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such
-175 stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of
the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining
114 the past is the national institutional system that took on its character-
811 istic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That
system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with
such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the
yeomanry itself.

-565 The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength.
565 If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it
-433 to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national po-
664 litical decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this om-
642 inous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes
more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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311 born country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America.
423 The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots
and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared
433 with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry
is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to
change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized
241 are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20-26). Yeomen cultivate
177 with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence.
While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop
choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence
orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially
sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma*
sagittifolium Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is
good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common
in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to
land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to
landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that
is, even when the capital and labor power to
work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore
the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon
failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their
own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French
tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size
of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United
States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in
small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the
breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is
462 nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

443 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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462 three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some
443 of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market
days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the
yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency
and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor
storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes
there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are
high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export
commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and
in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian
economy, not one of its causes.

443 The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand,
241 and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these activities
462 are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division
of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives
114 differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the
nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy
462 of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some
174 writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition,
175 since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African
443 societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political
241 unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were
433 serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate
in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

47 Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

565 caste is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats
from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a
person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics,
clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

● 175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804,
648 becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere.
It had been during the eighteenth century France's most
prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the plantation
565 system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to
develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of
African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century
the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that
now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any
stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an
open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They
are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and
they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned
[162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the
population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of
Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the
463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the
[461] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large
business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses.
Indeed, so completely accepted are caste lines, so practically difficult
would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education
necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic
life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the
élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the
quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in
turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few
years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not
lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of
the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

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743 [2] An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them
747 out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white;
you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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133 rains become torrents, washing away crops and soil. Brooks which run most of the year the Haitians dignify by the name of "rivière"; not even the largest, however—the Artibonite, which drains over a fifth of the country—is navigable for anything above a rowboat. The second largest "river," Les Trois Rivières, is only 96 kilometres long. Many of the smaller streams disappear into sinkholes or caves in limestone, veritable lost rivers. Even some of the lakes are ephemeral.

133 Most of the best land of the country lies in its few plains flanking
311 the mountains near the coasts, or extending like wedges into the
mountainous regions. In the northeast in the country back of Cap-
•175 Haïtien is the Plaine du Nord; here in colonial times were the most
[134] flourishing of the French plantations, the palatial residences, and the slaves who in 1791 began the insurrection which ultimately led to Haiti's independence. In the middle region are the Artibonite Plain near the coast, and the Central Plain back of the Black Mountains. Eastward from Port-au-Prince, the capital, is the Cul-de-Sac; and in the southwestern peninsula is the small plain of Les Cayes. All over the country in French days sugar cane grew in abundance, making white men wealthy. The irrigation systems have long since disappeared; fertilizer is far too costly for use; trees have been cut down to make room for hundreds of tiny farms to support the increasing population.

133 Not even all the plains are naturally productive. Many of them, on
134 the contrary, are arid, sterile, and forbidding, covered with cacti and other spiny plants. Indeed, the most arid areas of Haiti, including its salt marshes, are lowlands.

13 Although the country is wholly in the tropics, the usual precon-
ceived notion of the tropics does not apply. There are no impene-
trable rain forests or jungles, no wild beasts, and very few snakes.
132 Because of the mountains, there are wide differences in rainfall, soil, and vegetation, within a short distance. Occasional hurricanes do great damage to shipping and the water fronts. Infrequent droughts sometimes last for two or three months. Hailstorms that damage growing crops are fairly common. Taken as a whole, the country has an ample but not heavy rainfall; coming generally from the east and northeast, the trade winds strike the high ridges in the north and there deposit the greater part of their moisture in the Plaine du Nord. By the time they have passed down the western slope and across the Central Plain they are dried and rarefied, so that this region becomes

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increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, 132
the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which
projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the
island.

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile 433
wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock
barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for
the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local in-
dustries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town [439]
Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million [651]
dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small- [565]
town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they
can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the
country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get
beyond their pockets.

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions 565
between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian 175
life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the 178
origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the
eighteenth century.

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[p. 14]

II

FRENCH COLONIAL ORIGINS

175 648 FRANCE'S wealthiest colony in 1791 was, and had been for decades, the small territory of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was known at that time. It had belonged to France for less than a century. French freebooters and buccaneers of the seventeenth century actually presented the colony to their mother country, for these sea rovers, harrying the Spanish Main, used as a base for their predatory raids the small island of Tortuga (La Tortue, The Turtle) off the northern coast of Haiti. They often came over to the western part of the large Spanish island of Santo Domingo (Haiti), then almost deserted, to shoot wild cattle for food; then they would hasten back to Tortuga for safety. At first Tortuga had been shared by English, Dutch, and French buccaneers, but gradually the French came to outnumber the others, so that when the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 concluded the War of the Grand Alliance, France claimed and Spain ceded the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The English and Dutch were meanwhile picking up other Caribbean fragments of the decaying Spanish Empire.

175 563 24 The early years of this new French colony were unimpressive, the majority of its residents being former buccaneers, who could hardly have regarded agricultural life as other than dull, and who certainly did not make successful farmers. Only when new immigrants from France in the seventeen-twenties demonstrated that steady profits could be made by raising indigo, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, all of which flourished in the region, did the era of prosperity begin. [464] [439] Plantations were soon staked out all over Saint-Domingue. The great problem was to find adequate labor for the fields. Whoever had crops to sell was sure of a ready market, but crops would not grow 175 24 567 without cultivation. Since there were no natives in Saint-Domingue for the French planters to exploit, the colonizers chose the other favorite alternative of the eighteenth century: Negro slavery. In the 1730's Saint-Domingue began to compete with England's North American colonies for the cargo of the steady stream of slave ships from Africa. There is no indication that the supply of blacks ever

175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's
heyday.

Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased
175 until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
245 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
249 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
433 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
511 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and
565 display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white
French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their
coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do
colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their
riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression
in France.[2] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so
delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among
the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was
175 profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
439 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
505 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France
648 centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were
valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and
cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years
more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[3]

175 Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In
Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
565 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explo-
669 sion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record
that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew
the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment
of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

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[101] [1] The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

[2] Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

●175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs, petits blancs*, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English term will
565 translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years
567 before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosperous.
641 In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all
648 colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citizenship.
641 The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.
[595] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
563 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might
175 be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

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[3] The gens de couleur were also often called *affranchis*, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a 563
person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave 175
ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were 175
faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free
his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free colored 567
people had not known slavery in their families for four generations,
while still more had been free for two or three. During the
century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former
owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had [556]
instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as
well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors
afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous
gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and
went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the 175
petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset, 565
as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradition,
with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc
aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received
into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented
the toplofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more
irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society
was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or
grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de
couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class
whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added
fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the
latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie)
was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the
colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They
looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did
many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, nor
yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

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[4] Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical 114
combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties. 565
Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of
their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can
be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

175 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their chil-
565 dren to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a
565 third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others
423 more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is
567 impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of
162 their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 White women in general added their support to a movement in-
595 stigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de
563 couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people be-
175 cause of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mis-
581 tresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175
565 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment
829 against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

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162 [5] The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

[6] One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

[7] See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

lishing their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having 175
entered white society by such means, and further diluted their 565
Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently 829
became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most [556]
rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen
and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and
having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs.

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage 175
of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by 671
the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap 565
Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites.

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the 175
liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the contrary, 648
he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. 563
He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. 671
The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross.

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed 175
discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. 565
He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the 563
militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain 671
careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific

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[8] It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning. [829]

175 nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white
563 men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored
565 person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut
from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the
671 evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theatres
with whites.[10]

175 Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have
648 reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate
829 white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused
[649] among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could
hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in
[565] the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the untrammeled rulers. The *gens de couleur*, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

175 During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were inter-
646 twined with developments in France. Men and messages went back
648 and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling
671 announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General
would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of *grands blancs* who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

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[565] [829] [9] A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might have to hear the confession of a white woman.

[565] [10] When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

At Paris the following May, therefore, the thirty-seven delegates 175
presented themselves. Only six were admitted as deputies. And the 648
colonial skeptics proved correct in their apprehensions: revolutionary France soon became very much interested in the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue.

There had recently been formed in Paris a humanitarian group, 175
considered at the time to be ultra-radical, whose announced purpose 648
was the complete abolition of Negro slavery in all French posses- 567
sions. Following the principle of demanding much in order to gain 668
something, these *Amis des Noirs* concentrated their most serious efforts on regaining for colored colonial freedmen their former political rights. The recently promulgated "Rights of Man" made it very difficult for the French National Assembly[11] to deny the proposal of the Amis;[12] moreover, at this juncture the colored landlords of Saint-Domingue sent to Paris an offer to make the new French Republic a free gift of one fifth of their wealth on condition of being no longer subject to the creole tyranny of caste.

The strategical blunder of the self-assertive white planters having 175
now become entirely apparent to their deputies in Paris, these left no 642
stone unturned to thwart the objective of the Amis des Noirs. By 648
indefatigable manoeuvring they at least partially succeeded, for the National Assembly passed an ambiguous resolution which, while apparently granting political rights to colored people, nevertheless left the interpretation of the grant to already existing colonial authorities.

In the colony complete confusion reigned when news of the resolution was received. Colored people everywhere joyfully demanded their rights, only to be indignantly refused. The whites, with no intention of yielding an inch, were nevertheless undecided as to a proper course of action to pursue: one group wished to announce the colony's immediate independence from France, offering the familiar argument that only white planters knew how to manage the colony's peculiar affairs; the other group still cautiously counseled inaction and waiting for the storm to blow over. A young mulatto, Ogé, educated in France and encouraged by the Amis des

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[11] The National Assembly had succeeded the States-General.

[12] The Assembly was finding "liberté, égalité, fraternité" as uncomfortable a motto to live up to as Americans were finding their own declaration, in 1776, of belief in the "self-evident" proposition that all men are created free and equal.

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175 Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the
648 political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demon-
642 stration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed
them with notable brutality.

175 This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the
648 National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had
563 decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be
565 admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and
anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-
general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation.
175 The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they
567 would never secure their rights except by force. But before they
669 could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations
of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts were the slaves. Most of the blacks accordingly needed only leadership to arouse them and direct their vengeance. 175 567

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[13] An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Hayti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

669 Very little of the background of the insurrection is known. The certain facts are these: on the night of August 14, 1791, at a pretended Vodun ceremony in the woods of the Turpin plantation, during a violent storm, several wily and powerful slaves laid plans for a general uprising. Their intentions were communicated, apparently by drum signals, to neighboring plantations. Six days later the attack began, the blacks in that section of the North indiscriminately slaughtering every white man, woman, and child on whom they could lay their hands. From this centre the massacre spread, accompanied by general arson, until practically every plantation in the fertile northern plain was a shambles. The whites who had escaped destruction cowered in the capital city.

The insurrection of 1791 returned measure for measure to the planters for their previous cruelties. Whether one reads accounts written by Haitian patriots or by white apologists, the story is the same: the ferocities on both sides were almost incredible. Blacks gutted children and raped women, whites broke captured Negroes on the wheel, poured boiling oil in their ears, and flayed them alive. The Reign of Terror in France was decorous by comparison. The pent-up hatred of decades was working itself out.

175 669 Against half a million riotous blacks the handful of whites had no chance. All who could leave the country fled precipitately. The gens de couleur, on the contrary, although at first alarmed, soon discovered that the revolting slaves were inclined to be friendly to them. They accordingly tried to turn the insurrection to their own purpose, to seize the rule of the colony now being depopulated of whites. France, herself in turmoil, sent over various commissioners whose [648] thankless duty it was to try to restore order; but they were incompetent, often worked at odds with each other, and sometimes engaged in actual treachery. Matters were, if anything, complicated by their ministrations.

[648] In addition, Spain and England, always ready to harass the French, sent troops into Saint-Domingue on the pretext of trying to put down the slave insurrection lest it spread to their neighboring colonies of Santo Domingo and Jamaica. The French general in the colony, Laveaux, would shortly have been defeated if help had not come from two natives, one a well-to-do mulatto, the other a black

175 669 ex-slave, each of whom aroused his own group to fight off the invading Spaniards and English.

These two men emerging from the maelstrom were the cultured colored general, Rigaud, and the powerful Negro, Toussaint. United in purpose in 1793, they soon began to oppose each other. Their dissent foreshadowed the rift which was permanently to divide free Haiti.

175 159 669 Rigaud, born at Les Cayes in 1761,[14] had been brought up in Bordeaux, France, where he was taught the trade of a goldsmith. Like many other colored colonial youths, he went briefly to Georgia to fight on the side of the Americans in their revolution against England. Gifted with extraordinary military talent, he rose to prominence in Saint-Domingue following the slave insurrection, and played a major part in expelling the British from the colony. He was fiery, intellectual, and brilliant, but lacking in self-control and political subtlety, which put him at a disadvantage with Toussaint. Rigaud's admirers—almost the whole body of free colored people—included all the influential persons in the colony once the whites had been cowed or driven out; the South was devoted to him body and soul, and he had numerous partisans in the provinces of the North and West. But Toussaint was the idol of the half-million blacks.

Born a slave, Toussaint was fortunate in having a kindly master who permitted him the sort of work which gave him leisure for reading. He studied eagerly, devouring all accounts he could find of the military exploits of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Apparently he took no part in the slave uprising; on the contrary, he helped his master escape to the United States and later regularly provided him with money. Then he himself went to the Spanish part of the island, where he made a military reputation in the Spanish colonial army. When General Laveaux sought his aid against the invaders of harassed Saint-Domingue, the ex-slave accepted his overtures. Detractors of Toussaint call him a "cunning hypocrite" for joining and then deserting the Spaniards, and for accepting high rank under a French general whom he was even then (so it is asserted) planning to supersede. His decision to return to Saint-Domingue was certainly crucial, for it began his meteoric ascent to power.

[648] Accompanied by the black troops he had captained in the Spanish

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[632] [361] [14] Les Cayes, the third largest town in modern Haiti, was even in colonial times an important seaport. It is located on the southwestern peninsula.

colony, he fought engagements with several Spanish detachments 175
on the way back to Saint-Domingue, and soon achieved the return 669
to France of all the territory Spain had recently won from her. 648
Seeing that his ineffectively trained black troops were as yet no match 159
for the disciplined British, he temporarily withdrew from public sight in order to build his army into a coördinated, smoothly functioning machine. Then he not only defeated the British, but forced their complete withdrawal from the island. He freed General Laveaux, whom they had imprisoned in Cap Français, thereby putting his own commanding officer under personal obligation to him. By 1796 Toussaint was the undisputed hero of his soldiers and, through their praise, of the mass of black ex-slaves; moreover, the French commander trusted and respected him; even the whites of the former régime looked to him with hope, for they had grudgingly to concede that, black though he was, he alone had the power to restore peace and order in the colony.

Only the colored group looked askance at him. They had wel- 175
comed the insurrection of the slaves in 1791 as an invaluable, if 669
bloody, aid in their struggle for equality with the whites; but they were not inclined to be ruled by an ex-slave whose eminence was already a threat to the social order they wished to establish. When, in 1793, the French commissioners had abolished slavery in Saint-Domingue,[15] the action had been as distasteful to the free colored people as it was to the whites; both groups wanted to continue to own slaves; the gens de couleur merely wanted their share also in governing the colony. In their opinion, the struggle was getting out of hand. They gave their allegiance, consequently, not to Toussaint, but to their own man, Rigaud.

The black general now began to show himself as astute a politician as he had been a skilful soldier. He had a romantic streak, which made him assume the prophetic surname Louverture;[16] but beneath the romanticism was a peculiar diplomatic realism. When a newly arrived governor-general tried to stir up dissension between blacks and colored people, on the principle of divide and rule, Toussaint

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[15] In order to pacify the blacks and to win their support against the invading armies of Spain and England.

[16] The name Louverture, now generally written L'Ouverture, is ordinarily conceded to imply Toussaint's conviction that he would provide the opening through which his fellow blacks might achieve freedom. According to another account the name was given him because of his ability to make a breach in the ranks of the enemy; still another explanation refers to his missing front teeth.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 deftly had him promoted out of colonial office. When another
669 group of commissioners came, he agreed in conference with them
that the remaining whites should be expelled for the sake of peace; as
soon as this was done, however, he effected the nomination of both
the chief commissioner and General Laveaux as representatives of
the colony in the French Assembly, sitting in Paris. Under guise of
175 bestowing honors, he had got rid of every white person who had the
642 slightest claim to rule. By 1797 Toussaint was the supreme leader in
643 Saint-Domingue, his authority disputed only by Rigaud and the
colored group. A civil war was needed to settle the issue between
them, and since his forces were much more numerous than Rigaud's,
Toussaint emerged victor in the brief conflict. Rigaud fled to France,
the power of the mulattoes was broken, and no one was left openly
to contest Toussaint's rule.

"The First of the Blacks," as Toussaint was called, is a bewildering anomaly, and full of contradictions. He had been a slave for fifty years before the insurrection, and was to live only eleven after it. In that short period he became one of the most talked-of men in the world. His Spanish superior officer had said that "God in this terrestrial globe could not commune with a purer spirit"; the Frenchman, Lacroix, remarked, "No one approaches him without fear, and no one leaves him without respect." Even his enemies paid him homage: an English officer, as "a man, a governor, and a general"; a white Frenchman, as "a philosopher, a general, and a good citizen." When he died Wordsworth wrote a moving sonnet to him who had strengthened human faith in "man's unconquerable mind." Yet Toussaint had been a deserter and a schemer, and ruthlessly exploited his power to achieve absolute authority. His own deep conviction of his special mission to lead his people from misery to security has always for his apologists excused the more dubious aspects of his character.

To many Toussaint was a hero with elements of saintliness. In the overheated atmosphere of prejudice and hatred in Saint-Domingue he pursued a calm policy of moderation. Under him, anarchy and massacres came to an end. With an army at his beck and call, he used force only to maintain freedom for his fellow blacks and to defend the colony against foreign invasion. As nominal governor-general after 1799 he revived prosperity, inculcated discipline as an antidote to the intoxication of liberty, respected his contracts, and was a friend of law and order. On the other hand, he had moments

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of inordinate vanity, and would brook no interference. His henchmen had to endure merciless tongue-lashings. His own people's freedom, about which he was publicly so solicitous, was in many respects little better than slavery. 175 642 643

What he did is more easily told than what he was. Emerging, after a long reign of terror, as a leader in a land which had once been a paradise for whites, he checked among his people the passion and fear which had led to violence. With the restoration of peace, labor began once more on the plantations. The Negroes, though no longer slaves, were ordered back to work, and they docilely obeyed. The return of prosperity between 1799 and 1802 was amazing.

But the brilliance of Toussaint's rule was first dimmed and then completely extinguished by the rising star of Napoleon in France.[17] Haitian history between 1802 and 1804, although apparently incidental to the story of the contest between blacks and colored people which here concerns us, is nevertheless significant for an understanding of what was to transpire in Haitian social affairs. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at the effrontery of Toussaint's seizure of power in the colony. The black leader had shown canny statesmanship in winning the friendly coöperation of the president of the United States, John Adams. The supplies and ships that Adams sent enabled Toussaint not only to defeat Rigaud but to achieve independence from France in all but name. With American assistance, Toussaint negotiated an advantageous treaty with England. Probably even more annoying to the First Consul than these political triumphs was Toussaint's audacious success in aping and even anticipating the spacious actions by which Napoleon was trying to make himself majestic in the world's eyes.[18] 175 648 669

It is possible that Napoleon might not have paid so much attention

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[17] It seems strange that this black, a veritable genius whatever his faults, should be so mildly honored in modern Haiti. True, he is regarded with respect, and there are a few statues of him; but the homage of the people is paid rather to his successor, General Dessalines, the antithesis of Toussaint in everything but courage. It was Dessalines, of course, who struck the final blow for Haitian freedom, but even this triumph seems to the foreigner small in comparison with the very real achievements of Toussaint. [643]

[18] For example: Napoleon had given a new constitution to France after his *coup d'état* of the 18 Brumaire; similarly Toussaint, having effected his own coup in Saint-Domingue by deposing the French civil agent, citizen Roume, immediately thereafter gave his people a new constitution. In it he not only assumed all political power for life, but also ascribed to himself the right of naming his successor. Bonaparte was unable to take so daring a step for another year. There is ample evidence to show that meanwhile he chafed under the idea of being imitated and anticipated by a "gilded African," as he called Toussaint.

● 175 to Toussaint if Saint-Domingue had been merely a colony like
648 Martinique, and not the single centre from which measures for
669 rebuilding the French colonial system could radiate. France was once more taking over Louisiana from Spain; but before Bonaparte could effectively reach Louisiana to establish his New World empire, he must make sure of Saint-Domingue. The very real power of Toussaint had to be crushed, and through the whole of 1801 Napoleon was making preparations for the annihilation of the black governor.[19]

175 The plans were as follows: to send his brother-in-law, Leclerc,
649 with a formidable French army to "succeed" Toussaint as governor;
721 to try to persuade the blacks that the new régime was entirely benevolent to their race, so that no armed resistance would be offered; if persuasion and diplomacy failed, to fight and conquer the Negroes, subduing them once more to slavery; and, above all, to capture Toussaint with all his black counselors and send them as prisoners to France. Napoleon undertook to prepare the way for Leclerc by writing personally to Toussaint: "Assist the Captain-General [Leclerc] with your counsels, your influence, and your talents. What can you desire?—the liberty of the blacks? You know that in all the countries where we have been, we have given it to the people who had it not." He repeated this assurance in his message a week later to the French legislature (November 22, 1801): "At Saint-Domingue and at Guadeloupe there are no more slaves. All are free there; all will remain free." Still further, the proclamation he drew up for Leclerc to publish upon his arrival, as a reassurance to the blacks, ran: "If you are told that these forces are destined to ravish your liberty, answer: The Republic has given us liberty, the Republic will not suffer it to be taken from us!"

Leclerc with his army arrived at Cap Français late in January, 1802. He hoped to be received at the capital as a friend, but Christophe, the black general in charge of the city, repulsed his advances. Leclerc was obliged to attack; on February 5 Christophe set fire to the city and withdrew to the neighboring hills. The war of independence had begun.

[19] The part played by Toussaint for a brief moment in the history of the United States is full of significance. Certain historians are of the opinion that if Napoleon had been successful in the reconquest of Saint-Domingue he would have turned his attention to America rather than to Europe, for he had great colonial schemes. His failure in the colony, according to this theory, made him try to withdraw gracefully from the New World by selling Louisiana to the United States.

For three months Toussaint's vigorous fighting broke the force of 175
the French attack; one white army was swept away. But Toussaint 648
made two fatal errors of judgment: he relied upon his trained army 726
with its Negro generals, instead of arming his half-million Negroes 728
for guerrilla warfare; and he trusted the pledged word of honor of Leclerc. His army fought bravely enough against the French legions, but the consensus of military experts is that Toussaint's officers, jealous of his domination and feeling that eventually France must win, treacherously gave over their posts and forces to Leclerc. Christophe surrendered on April 26, and Toussaint had no alternative but to put himself in Leclerc's hands.

Napoleon's private orders to Leclerc were positive and precise: 175
"Follow your instructions exactly, and the moment you have rid 648
yourself of Toussaint, Christophe, Dessalines, and the principal brigands, and the masses of the blacks have been disarmed, send over to the continent all the blacks and mulattoes who have played a rôle in the civil troubles. . . . Rid us of these gilded Africans, and we shall have nothing more to wish." Leclerc set himself methodically to carry out these instructions; by April, 1802, he had disarmed the blacks and received Christophe's surrender; the next task was to rid himself of Toussaint. By an apparently innocent invitation to dine and discuss the affairs of the colony, he lured Toussaint into his headquarters on June 10.[20] In the course of the meal Toussaint was seized, bound, and hurried on board a waiting ship. Haiti never saw him again; within a year he died of cold and starvation in a dungeon high in the Jura Mountains of southeastern France.

With Toussaint out of the way, it was now in order to proceed to 175
the second part of Napoleon's plan—the reëstablishment of slavery. 648
Leclerc was to use his own discretion as to the precise moment and 727
manner of announcing this. His instructions from the Minister of 567
Marine, Decrès (June 14, 1802), read in part:

> As regards the return of the blacks to the old régime, the bloody struggle out of which you have just come victorious with glory commands us to use the utmost caution. Perhaps we should only entangle ourselves in it anew if we wished precipitately to break that idol of liberty in whose name so much blood has already flowed. For some time yet vigilance, order, a discipline at once rural and military, must take the place of the positive and pronounced slavery of the colored people of your colony. Especially the

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[20] There is evidence to show that Christophe suggested this stratagem to Leclerc.

175 master's good usage must re-attach them to his rule. When they shall have
648 felt by comparison the difference between a usurping and tyrannical yoke
727 [apparently he means such a yoke as Toussaint's] and that of the legitimate
561 proprietor interested in their preservation, then the moment will have arrived for making them return to their original condition, from which it was so disastrous to draw them.

175 The plan to reëstablish slavery, however, was never carried out,
648 nor was its scheduled sequel, the occupation of Louisiana. The French
727 soldiers in Saint-Domingue began to succumb to an invisible assailant —yellow fever. The first French army of 17,000 men had been largely consumed in the task of conquering Toussaint's armies; the second was now being swept away by disease. Leclerc's letters to Napoleon pleading for reinforcements soon became frantic in their despair. Fever was weakening the army at the very moment when rumors of impending reënslavement were strengthening the number of active antagonists to the French. The black generals who had deserted Toussaint for Leclerc now swung back again to the opposition. Then Leclerc himself fell ill of the fever. Apparently all-conquering in June, 1802, by November he was dead.

175 This was the turning point in Napoléon's whole American policy.
727 The war had ruined Saint-Domingue economically; it had destroyed plantations, paralyzed labor, and reduced the population to bar-
721 barism. To resume the conquest would have cost France heavily; the
648 army dreaded service in a region where death was almost certain; the financial expense had been frightful: one year of war had consumed 50,000 men and several million dollars, yet at least as many men and as much money would still be needed before any return could be expected. Consequently, Napoleon decided to withdraw from his whole American experiment, saving face as far as possible. He appointed the brave but incompetent Rochambeau to succeed Leclerc, promised him reënforcements—and then broke the Peace of Amiens, so that France became embroiled in a European war. Affairs in Saint-Domingue (including the troops promised to Rochambeau) were conveniently forgotten after March, 1803; and the whole Louisiana territory was sold to the United States.

175 The end of French control in Saint-Domingue came shortly.
648 Rochambeau, as well as he could, waged desultory warfare, hanging, shooting, drowning, burning all the Negroes he could catch; hunting them with fifteen hundred bloodhounds bought in Jamaica for more

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than a hundred dollars each; wasting money, squandering men. On 175
the other side, Dessalines and Christophe massacred every white 648
within their reach. Rochambeau held on until November, 1803, when he surrendered with his few remaining men to the English in Jamaica.

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed the independence of 175
Haiti, choosing this aboriginal Indian name (meaning "mountain- 642
ous") rather than the French Saint-Domingue. What the colored 648
people had begun with their petitions to the French Assembly in 1789 had now worked itself out, but along lines entirely different from their hopes or plans. The whites were gone, but the blacks were in control. Now a struggle for precedence was to begin between the ruling blacks and the still aspiring people of color.[21]

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[21] The historical details rehearsed in this chapter are summarized from the many documented monographs and histories of the period cited in the Bibliography at the end of this volume. It seems unnecessary to quote each entry for each historical statement made in this sketch of background material. [114]

III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1804–1843

1. *Dessalines (1804–1806)*

175 643 159 If ever a country had an opportunity to start absolutely fresh in choosing its own social institutions, Haiti had that opportunity in 1804. Free at last, with no traditions to uphold, the first independent Negro state in the world, owing allegiance to no man or nation, the Haitians might (theoretically, at least) have invented an entirely new little world of economic, political, religious, and social life. All paths were open to them. Dessalines,[1] as head of state, had only to lead them. His mental limitations, however, were such that he could only follow where the hated French had led, and soon set the Haitians upon the road to a caste system.

175 642 643 The first part of the story of independent Haiti is to a certain extent the story of the alternative lines of action laid down by four great men, the black Dessalines and his equally black successor Christophe, the mulatto Pétion and his worshipful mulatto disciple Boyer.

On New Year's Day, 1804, Dessalines made a stirring proclamation of independence. In it were many references to *liberté* but none whatever to *égalité* or *fraternité*. The two years of his rule show clearly that he had no use for such abstractions as equality or fraternity, while liberty to him was synonymous only with freedom from French dominance. He was a tyrant whose very tyranny unwittingly prepared the way for eventual control by the colored group over the blacks.

Accompanying the proclamation of Dessalines was another signed by his generals, naming him governor-general for life, swearing "to obey blindly all laws emanating from his authority," giving him the right to make peace or war, and permitting him to name his successor. Absolutism was the order of the day. In the same paragraph in which he condemned French despotism, Dessalines said to his

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[1] Jean-Jacques Dessalines had been born a slave on a plantation near Grande-Rivière du Nord in the seventeen-fifties or -sixties. Unlike Toussaint, whose leading general he was, Dessalines was illiterate. The outstanding characteristic of his temperament was his violent passion.

people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which 175
the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, 642
you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous 643
idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his
direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was
personally self-centred and inordinately grasping.

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts 175
to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered 643
each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the 466
most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led imme- 712
diately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, 361
not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations
near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so
isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world.

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare 175
of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural 643
projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had 433
been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made neces- 701
sary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men 464
from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of for- 712
tresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free 175
Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 162
people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to
two,

175 162 [566] two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

175 463 642 656 [562] Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

175 642 565 This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

175 566 466 All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to [433] what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

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[2] See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'Ile d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

[3] A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. 175
Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of 566
slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a 466
third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might
even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from
the plantation to which he was attached.

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the 175
roots for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic 178
form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the 463
existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of 24
all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in 433
patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established 566
some other economic system—a division of estates into small
properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny;
a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism
with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect
the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to 175
keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the terminology 566
of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become
acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the
only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited
as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst
punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork,

175 were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied.
566 Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the
French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

167 Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not
175 inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly
established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills,
where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their
lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all
Haiti had become a land of peasants.

175 At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials,
463 who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage
555 of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order
to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was
647 necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers,
565 each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there
was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there
was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

175 Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to
565 achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual
647 labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed
the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came
[212] into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur
filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could
read and write was woefully limited.

175 The army was the great power in the country, for the new state
701 was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the
maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-tion

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[4] Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of 175
Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that 701
overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One [162]
tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service.
Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was [181]
nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople 175
who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti
had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably 463
no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. 361
Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were 175
colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. 471
Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the 423
country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old
proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their 425
land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines 175
only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself
crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he 643
permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the o-o-o

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The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

● 175 423 425 471 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete monopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 421 [693] Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a general verification of property titles. This would have been a delicate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"

425 536 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

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[642] [648] [5] The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated 175
in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to 425
withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or 556
power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little
opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous
attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect,
without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines 175
created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other 423
lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often 425
cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess
those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property
added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves
clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear con-
sciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus [427]
acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better 175
elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, 643
the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade 421
enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually 472
wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare 661
people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words 563
Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for
position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous
combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre
sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec
équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused
the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines 175
to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He 643
was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. 563
His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made 661
him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of
dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his
statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

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[6] Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which [175]
Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than [425]
two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the [423]
government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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● 175 beside other ex-slaves was too evident to avert ridicule, which
643 Dessalines quickly noted. Few opportunities escaped the Emperor,
563 therefore, of making the light-skinned Haitians quake in their boots.
661 He wrote to Pétion (August 24, 1804), leader of the colored people, that in his slaughter of white Frenchmen he had often been "unable" to distinguish between whites and light-colored Haitians. Pétion and his friends knew that Dessalines did not regret his inability to make the distinction.[7]

175 Possibly Dessalines was clear-sighted enough to realize that the old
distinctions of color, if allowed to continue in the new state as in-
563 dicative of social prestige, might cause endless strife within the
643 nation. Possibly, on the other hand, he wished to make the lighter-skinned Haitians realize that he, a Negro, was more than their equal. Whatever his underlying motives, he was impatient with the struggle for prestige. The steps he took to eradicate distinctions based upon color were characterized by his usual blunt tactlessness. In 1805 he informed Pétion, the outstanding mulatto general, that a union of black and colored people was essential to the happiness of the Empire; he said he wanted the Haitian people to become *bronzed* by this union, so that there would be no longer any important difference of skin color. All this was preface to a proposal that Pétion, as the ablest of the mulattoes, should marry the Emperor's black daughter, Célimène. Pétion, refined, highly educated, and gently cynical, was considerably perturbed and frankly embarrassed by the suddenness of this radical suggestion. His reply, that he was not inclined to marry at all, offended Dessalines and made him suspect a slight, but he dismissed Pétion with the pointed suggestion that he "think the matter over." Pétion knew, as the Emperor did not, that one of his aides-de-camp, Chancy, was not only in love with Célimène but had already got her with child. It is entirely possible, too, that he was aware of the growing underground opposition to Dessalines and that, as the Emperor's star was beginning to decline, he did not wish

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[721] [7] It must be said to the credit of the black masses that they did not relish the systematic slaughter of the whites which so pleased Dessalines. Negro cultivators frequently collected potential victims, hiding them and aiding their escape from the country. The repugnance of the masses for such massacre was so evident that their generals had at times to drive them at bayonet's point. "The blacks of the plain behaved very well," said an exile in a letter (June 1, 1804) written from Jamaica to Moreau de Saint-Méry. Madiou says that after the massacre of the whites some Haitian blacks abandoned their country and went to join former masters in a foreign land.

to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly 175
discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions 563
against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to 643
him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed.

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the 175
minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the
guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate 643
his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in 661
statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black 641
alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was [871]
actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet."

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian 175
life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who 565
had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for 641
themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world.

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on Octo- 175
ber 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned 643
the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be 661
fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and

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175 643 661 such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing. [103] Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (*1807–1820*)

175 178 Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint, and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

175 643 642 662 The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro henchman, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante* which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

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[8] The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a state according to his own idea of what a state should be. 175 643 642 662

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was indisputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti. 175 643 663

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy [712] [644] 0-0

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Taxes were heavy

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651 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial
652 and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His
175 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither under-
643 stood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he
159 seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws.
Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure
643 of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by
Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the
[641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable
tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government
estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders
427 among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were
475 tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly,
655 be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were en-
566 trusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth
643 to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself
rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by
643 refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as per-
fectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years
642 after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a
565 kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts,
knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing 175 643
if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. 642
It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to 565
call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human
material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic
and a political purpose.

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been 175
lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term 651
investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To
this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—
one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom
while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then
guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly
there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample
prosperity resulting from regularity and security.

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an 175
agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative 566
freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be 641
at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons 466
and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of
their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and
sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a
crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not
move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or
another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were
natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to
live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his [582]
living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a
prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because
of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of
future cultivators, from deserting agriculture.

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the 175
soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. 566
Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as 512
strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock 466
to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four
or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work,
which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine
o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of

● 175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the
fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation.
As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of
466 them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were
insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
407 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in
178 unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

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[241] [9] The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to
a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached 175
—might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] 566
Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time 178
have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the [484]
military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by
the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became
fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after 175
his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of 178
the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast 291
days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad 527
in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appear- 183
ance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of
poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous [461]
regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the
great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty 175
in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches 577
or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately 177
turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of 175
the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was 566
infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery,
their new status was definitely higher.

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[10] Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African [625]
kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters.

[11] This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, [577]
for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from [186]
England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress."

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175 their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be
thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy
565 was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build
566 it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators
who had managed to lease small estates could be considered
middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to
have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a
plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather
than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon
forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his
175 expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the intermittent
civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and
669 Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and
643 colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth.
563 Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that
few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the
North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at
Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees
of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took
exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he
was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he
was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of
whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned
man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his
175 loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an
643 underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally
at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of
721 many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-going
563 régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe
was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The
South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage.
[727] Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and
the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed
several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more
defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one
writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so
deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even 643
ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she 721
had prayed for the success of Pétion. 563

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned 175
somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to 643
his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South 167
occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-
ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and 563
leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between 175
cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats 565
who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was
strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of [461]
mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the
masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Educa- [871]
tion, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual in- 114
sight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which 175
an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military 642
despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

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[12] Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

114 642 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of
175 any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which
> [471] wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

175 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one
642 of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a
566 solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval
631 feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares.*
421 Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state
625 ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor,
692 and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

[13] R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

[14] Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

[15] These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671] [16] The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Barskett (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's 175
sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative 643
which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in 642
addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if 433
the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his
leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy
these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living.
Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously
effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity
she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce [438]
and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, sub- [439]
stituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised [652]
was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000
annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a 175
social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, 565
and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion (1807–1818)* 171

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century 175
exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class 631
lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

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[17] Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken. [114]

171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
631 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic
power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his
surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his
159 bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he
knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
[645] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave
sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator,
[871] Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational
[423] system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled
constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père.*" 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion 643 was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if 159 a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land.

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy 175 flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant 423 socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. 178 Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way.

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

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[18] He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

[19] December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

[20] The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*enraciner dans tous l'amour du sol.*"

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● 175 to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately
423 sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[21]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land
175 tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore
643 the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing
423 was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the
mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their
663 former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but
he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

175 He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried
423 landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the
President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of
[428] land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed
to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

[illegible] As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

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114 [21] Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 165–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

423 [22] Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been *by* Haitians *from* Haitians.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture required little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime. 175 651 471

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts. 175 652

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring 175 423

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[23] By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

[24] On April 21, 1807.

[25] Or ten *carreaux*. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

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about any radical change, for few of the common people could find money to pay for thirty acres, while the well-to-do all wanted more.

[433] Every concession desired by the landed proprietors had now been granted—with the result that economic prosperity was showing a steady decline. It was only when this fact was abundantly apparent that Pétion took the step for which he has since been so fulsomely praised and so roundly criticized. By permission of the Senate, in a law of December 30, 1809, he began to give away state lands: fifteen acres of cultivable soil to every soldier in the army, to be held in perpetuity, with proportionately larger grants to higher officers.

Opposition immediately arose to this measure, and from expected quarters. The owners of great estates protested that if soldiers had farms, other people would soon want (and receive) them, leaving no workers on the large plantations. Social climbers protested, for when practically anyone can own land there is no particular social distinction in having it. Pétion's minister, Bonnet, opposed the permanent alienation of the chief financial resource of the state, proposing instead the grant of long-term loans to soldiers for the purchase of land. Pétion was not insensible to the logic of some of these objections; he said, however, that a nation which relied upon the willing labor of masses of its citizens was ultimately stronger than one which depended upon forced labor of any kind. As for the socially aspiring, he could ignore their arguments since they were not publicly and openly expressed. To his minister he pointed out that loans, if made, would in all probability never be repaid, so that one might as well face the reality at once and give people the land.

All through the next decade Pétion made new and democratic divisions of the land. Able generals were given large tracts, partly as wages, partly as a stimulus to productive agriculture on their part. By another enactment, military invalids were rewarded with land. Eventually most of the rest of the public domain was either put on sale at such moderate price that thousands of humble Haitians might purchase their bit, or was effectively occupied by people who "squatted" far up in the hills, out of official view.

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The democratization of land led to new adjustments in the economic system. People who owned small farms would obviously not continue to raise sugar and coffee, but rather turn to food crops for immediate family consumption. Only the large plantations could carry on the cultivation of money crops. These in turn, no longer able

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to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique 175
for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the 471
new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* 24
and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production
of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the
latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of
whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on
the other hand, became rather complicated.

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience 175
of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now 427
that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay 471
wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming
in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants
closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the
United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to
tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant;
but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary
machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure
of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the [675]
tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement
must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even
then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three
months, with a declaration to the local official.

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A 175
tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, 675
even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his 686
regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a 692
month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment
to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising
between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the
local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the
justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town.
A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian
equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for
a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement
must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant
farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of

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[26] The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word. [192]

175 675 692 their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the 175 671 466 protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

175 647 241 A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Dessalines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

175 466 24 656 Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example, a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

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[27] Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

[466] [465] [28] This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate 175
sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more 466
variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field 24
all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from 656
the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields.

Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners 175
had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social 466
security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income 471
of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of 24
plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could.

Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift 175
the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for 433
decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation 245
requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the 249
other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life.

[29] That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the [466]
workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days.

175 642 178 433 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic leanings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 178 565 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 671 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion. Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

may not have all the heart desires. Under Dessalines there had been stern discipline of the workers but no recognition of the aristocracy; now under Pétion the people went their own inefficient way, but aristocratic eminence was happily recognized. 175 671

Examples of experimental legislation abound. Some proposals succeeded but more failed. One of the partial successes was the establishment of an agricultural holiday, *la fête de l'Agriculture*, to stimulate interest in good cultivation. Two months before the day set, the commandants of departments, arrondissements, and cantons, together with the justices of these divisions, were to nominate the laborer in each parish who had done the best work of the year. A prize medal was awarded not only for the sake of honoring him but also to stimulate his fellows. Similarly the officials would choose a child between seven and ten years of age, living on the best cultivated *habitation* in the district and belonging to parents most distinguished by their conduct and fondness for work, to be brought up and educated at the expense of the state. The annual feast was celebrated for many years after Pétion's death, but the officials became too lax to make careful selections of prize-winners. The holiday was kept, therefore, but served none of its original purposes. 175 527

As a case of legislation that failed may be cited the highly moral measure encouraging, but not requiring, legitimate marriages among cultivators rather than the customary informal union without ceremony. The preamble of this law pointed out that legal marriages were 175 582 588

> the only means of assuring a person of all the advantages of society; of procuring consolation, care, and help in sorrows and in sickness; of making purity of customs, so necessary for the happiness of men and the conservation of their health, reign among the people; of steadily increasing the population of each habitation; of extending agriculture and of increasing production.[30]

The mass of people, however, had had no experience of legal marriage. In the time of slavery such unions would not have been respected by an owner who wished to sell his slaves, and Dessalines had seemed to care very little whether people married or merely lived together informally. It will shortly be seen in detail how lasting was this inertia of tradition.[31]

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[30] Cited in Saint-Rémy, *op. cit.*, V, 29.

[31] See Part III, "Sex Relations and Home Life."

175 433 652 554 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane, cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 643 641 563 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave preference in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 643 642 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to 175
have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse 643
him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every 642
group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask 175
the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? 433
Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic.
The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely 114
and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naïvely confident 643
that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He 423
goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by [182]
> the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought [24]
> about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture"[32] throughout the Republic.[33]

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[32] J. N. Léger, *Haïti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.

[33] Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), pp. 260–263.

175 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the
114 divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming
433 advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of
433 large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase
652 of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such
642 practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life (1818–1826)*

175 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his
643 meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years
642 later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

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[34] W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] [35] Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] [36] In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government 175
which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two 642
might have been fruitful. 643

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his
great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion,
to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even
more than his former chief the force of personality which might
have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti.
Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe,
which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the
earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the
gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years
that his people would become industrious of their own accord.
His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency 175
the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements 433
that little work could be got from them beyond that required to
produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was [652]
driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of
mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the [316]
richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil.

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful 175
expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of 652
his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it 24
had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; 433
in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his 466
laissez-faire policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed
the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic,
landholding class) who advised the reëstablishment of a coercive
system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the
country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a
great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who
could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering
cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was
luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who
offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the
average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when
he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family.

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[37] This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

175 Convinced at last that the easygoing policy was a failure, Boyer
24 devised by way of remedy a new set of agricultural laws. Where his
671 predecessors in the North had forced action first and then issued
simple laws to fix the practice, Boyer, always cerebral rather than
643 active, planned a complete Code which was designed to call forth
action. On May 1, 1826, following an address by the President, the
Senate issued the Code Rural, an ingenious attempt of Boyer and his
secretary-general, Inginac, to reorder the agricultural life of Haiti.

Never again in the history of the country was so detailed a scheme worked out. It was an attempt on a grand scale to order the life of all people for common prosperity. In addition to its own broad scope and elaborate detail, it was fortified by almost unanimous support among the aristocracy, not only the ex-peers of Christophe's defunct kingdom, but also the large landowners of the republic who under Pétion had never known large incomes. In considering the Code, one cannot restrain a certain admiration of Boyer's ingenious mind. Yet it marked the end rather than the beginning of plantation agriculture, for it utterly failed of its purpose. It was the impressive monument over the tomb of state control.

To examine it further, we must desert the world of men for one of pure economic device. The journey is hardly one of discovery, for Boyer and his aides were simply attempting to freshen up for use the methods which had served colonial Saint-Domingue and feudal Haiti. For all the tedium of a voyage through the mazes of an economic plan which came to naught, the Code will be found significant as marking the end of a way of life, even when the way which succeeded it had already begun to take form.

175 The dominating principle of the Code was the Haitian's "obliga-
671 tion" to work on the land. To this end, the worker was once more
24 legally attached to the soil. Every individual who was not a public
566 functionary, and who had not private means or a profession—in plain
English, every Haitian except the aristocrat, the official, the artisan,
693 and the soldier—was bound to the land, with no right to separate
himself from it except in case of imminent danger. An agricultural
worker might apply to the local *juge de paix*[38] for permission to quit
the countryside to live in a town or village, but the judge was not to
give the permission without being assured of the morality of the

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[38] A functionary who combined the offices of local judge, justice of the peace, and recorder.

applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself 175
economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children 671
to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate 24
from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish 566
a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were 693
made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer
might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which
he was attached.

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise 175
among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency 671
of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' 474
coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the
Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by 686
authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such 566
engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three
years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are
fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief
town of the commune.

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and 175
grazing establishments,[39] also the making of contracts between the 671
proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation 625
of Christophe's Dahomets, to act as inspectors of plantations and of 421
the workers on them.

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not 175
proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made 686
a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be
arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them 24
that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they
refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in
refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is
condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the
prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents.

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[39] This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regularly
671 carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except
24 for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a
half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[843] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned
to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return
to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she
has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are
punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays
[527] are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by
night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
473 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and managers,
24 overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accustomed
175 method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
465 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the
laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the
government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would
be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed
not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth
of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation
of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, receiving
their living from it, in return preserving order and routine.
24 Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might
still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers
were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local
justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

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[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were 175
responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to 692
their military superiors. 24

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the 175
serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black suc- 175
cessors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's, 566
but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There 671
is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure.

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away 175
throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and 423
efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided

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[41] R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), p. 15, called it "*l'inféodation à la glèbe*," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parceling of the land and any further lapse into idleness on the part of the workers. [114]

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

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[433] [24] [42] Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [645] [43] Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

● 175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians

> 703 who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest*. The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
433 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
436 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single
466 holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
625 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any
661 worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
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[44] Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.

175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
536 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> 114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
> 175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
> 433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
> 423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
> 425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can neither find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

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[534] [45] Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connections with the Vodun religion.

[241] [46] Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47] 175 427

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done." 175 114 466

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman: 175 114

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49] 433 249 674 311 461

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if 175 435 423 [671] [425]

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[47] James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.

[48] John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.

[49] V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haiti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1843), II, 263 ff.

175 he could save or borrow the money, buy a small patch and become a
425 freeholder in his own right. And in the mountains, if one were
willing to endure isolation, one could get much land by squatter's claim.

175 A vivid indication of the declining economic condition of the country will be found in the actual scale of real-estate prices. In the
436 eighteen-twenties the finest land in the republic did not sell for more
423 than $60 an acre, even when contiguous to a port for shipping or extremely fertile. Such a price would have been ridiculous in the days of the French colony. Farms in the plains and mountains, suitable for cocoa and cotton, could be had in Boyer's time for $20 or $30 an acre in any quantity from ten to five hundred acres. In the rich Artibonite Valley small plots for horticultural purposes sold for $40 an acre; indigo and cotton land rarely brought over $30; and a complete cotton plantation which had borne richly in colonial days sold for from $12 to $20 an acre. In the North, despite its fertility and more careful cultivation under Christophe, land seldom brought more than $40 or $45, while pasture lands could scarcely find purchasers at $40. A lot in Port-au-Prince with a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of fifty, well situated for trading purposes, brought only $200.[50] Fifteen years later even these prices were fantastically high, for by then no one was wealthy enough to purchase an estate.

5. *Lapse into Peasantry* (*1827–1843*)

463 "Peasant" is one of those words whose meaning everyone knows yet whose definition is never precise. It clearly carries the connotation
241 of farming the land by conservative, generally uneducated, persons whose families have for generations lived on the same plot of earth without any great ambition to move away or change their economic lot. It means small ownership. And most particularly it means a comparatively low social status, for we think of peasantry as existing only in those countries which have a clear-cut social class system, with a stratification which would make it difficult for a person to move from one class to another. His land is to the peasant both home and living; his household is dependent almost solely upon the product of its own labor. He is generally conceived to be too complacent, if not too ignorant or too dull, to take advantage of commercial opportunities which might bring him wealth. "It is increasingly

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[50] These figures for 1824–28 are from Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the 463
peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his 241
native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51]

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and 175
Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of 24
Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had 423
failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations 671
of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and 425
lesser officers, are as follows:[52]

134 grants of	150 carreaux	(about 450 acres).	Total: 59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000

Grand total: 448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of 175
primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection 428
to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small 178
properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since 423
a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was
still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and (311)
commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that
46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the [162]
population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But

> A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said 175
> to be badly cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate 241

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[51] C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.

[52] This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.

[53] See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–43.

[54] Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

175 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we
241 arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is
engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent
[311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can
exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies
[231] from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise sufficient
provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for
[437] the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose
[431] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for
money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses
[342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of
them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with logwood,
or aloe hedges.[55]

175 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of
423 the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being
427 landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people
owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call
473 it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but
427 temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code
Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers
24 worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

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[55] *Ibid.*

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The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,
had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, 175
with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain 427
from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one 461
plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or 24
to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to
him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, 466
almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased.

Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was 175
no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate 427
as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was 24
weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than
another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in 461
common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family?

These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately 175
broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in 473
order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing 427
one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to
the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised 24
upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of 425
concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, 461
if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from resigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present.

Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
427 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
24 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
425 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, some-
461 times among a whole group of potentially good workers, because
one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of
such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not
suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself;
his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in
some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving
force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to
[686] local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers.
Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to
both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the
proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if
he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
466 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
425 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants.
178 The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were
invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no
steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations.
The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive
out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work;
but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn
against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced
laws on the statute books.

880 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

unplanned, undesired

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the 175
result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, 421
presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay 24
the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system 463
adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (1820–1843)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His 175
tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus 178
with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825— 565
all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save
his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he
announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety
of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices.
Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so
did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was
during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part
although not wholly, on the basis of color.

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far 175
as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years 647
promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a 563
mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an 212
insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy,
and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the 555
supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates.
Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions,
ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office,
and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own
complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not 175
necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, fre- 701
quently chose this career which, while not very profitable in mone- 555
tary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic 563
security.

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an 175
ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost 647
wholly in control of the colored element and the military force 701
dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed
during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between [563]
army and state.

● 175 Color prejudice, in so far as a mass of people is concerned, is
563 generally one-sided, directed by the upper group at the lower. The ordinary illiterate worker between 1820 and 1840 was inclined to accept without much question the superiority of the lighter-skinned Haitians. Resentment was often present, and envy, but hardly prejudice. The real contest developed between the colored élite and the blacks of ambition. The latter had reason to feel proud of their rise from slavery; many had shown ability, and felt themselves the mental and moral equals of the mulattoes; the men who had broken the power of the French, ended slavery, and founded the state were Negroes—and now Haiti was being ruled by mulattoes. The contest between the two groups was the obverse side of prejudice. The envied minority, jealously guarding their distinction, were generally conscious of prejudices which they rationalized with pronouncements about superior mentality and innate qualities. They would concede the difference between an educated black and a mere peasant, but would still cling to the feeling that all the culture in the world would not make the educated Negro a peer of the mulatto.

175 Government documents of the period can hardly be expected to
563 call attention to color prejudice and its concomitant resentments. To
114 foreign observers, however, it was immediately apparent and note-
643 worthy as a dominant characteristic of the country. Testimony is
671 unanimous as to its existence; more important, the commentators all
agreed that it was growing. An acute Frenchman called Boyer "the slow martyr of his color,"[56] being a mulatto in a republic of blacks: his color made Boyer suspect, so that the President had to spend most of his time and energy trying to avoid conflicts on this issue. It is entirely possible that Boyer's dearest schemes, particularly the enforcement of the Code Rural, failed primarily because the army was controlled by Negroes, whom the President dared not drive too hard; while only the army could have enforced faithful performance by the black laborers. An American doctor stated in 1838 that "the mulattoes, to preserve the sceptre of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel himself empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringement on his dignity."[57]

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[56] Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, I, 211. This observation is much more to the point than the specious remarks which follow, attributing Boyer's inaction partly to the enervating effects of the tropical climate.

[57] Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 259.

Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic 175
probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste 871
system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only 563
black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a 564
social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring 178
Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the
whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[58]

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to 175
serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; 555
but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign 662
trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business 661
deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial 178
gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from [647]
colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that
his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

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Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had 563
no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex- 564

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[58] See chap. XVI.

175 ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color
563 became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians
564 with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be
whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally
[178] himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the
quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an
untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes,*" as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe
[673] in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate
objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a
[671] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws
[641] were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of
profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest
[423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a
strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did
not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

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[192] [59] A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

[60] Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 283–284.

trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of 175
the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges 563
of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. 564
Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it
was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having
children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous
attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or [193]
seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian.
Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more
than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests
imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among
the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no
indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their
services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived
a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the
churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of
prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had
befriended Boyer in former times.

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the 114
Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it: 175

> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the 642
> most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of
> American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people
> replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the
> intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time
> denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these
> inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and 175
assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in 563
the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere
widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these
distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or
by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, 175
was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands 565
of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built 563

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[61] Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682. [113]

175 an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored
563 élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group
565 of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although
[701 prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth
669] century was continually, used by whichever group offered more.
A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safe-
175 guard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His
178 rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the
642 auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent on-
643 looker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti
of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, fore-
175 men, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to
178 force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was
642 carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the
433 country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler
466 was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to
shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier
178 year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti
511 had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however,
failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

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[162] [62] Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate
[175] the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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of living only for the day by making people content with a low 175
level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the 178
rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely 511
has the incentive to improve his living conditions.

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and 175
in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important 178
export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures alto- 433
gether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked 257
into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. 249
Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for 245
sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost 439
never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[63]

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 175
1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation 178
projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the 24
wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops 433
and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management.

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con-

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[63] The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843. [433]

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	*1843*
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,460,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

Haiti under Dessalines still had many building
175 of French con-
178 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
331 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe,
not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French
[731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly
ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the
striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[466] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[423] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[461] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, gen-
[164] erally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in
passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

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[64] Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 84.

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people 175
and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. 178
Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people 433
ignorant, one hardly looks for progress. [511]

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through
most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most 114
vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and 175
found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he 178
reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a 433
horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise 466
him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the 24
arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the 175
Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from 178
the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence 181
of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a 466
plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty- 464
two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who 427
were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

> appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

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[65] See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

[66] Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

[r. 88]

IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the 178 stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase 175 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though 668 undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex- 175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam- 668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro- 669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months 643 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

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[643] [1] Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis- [159] Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated 175
story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the
evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary 643
reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state
between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of
office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace,
one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one
resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after
incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years.

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence
the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, 175
mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was 669
permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about
capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They
soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to
rule was fatal to them and their clique.

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution
for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. 175
Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been 668
reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil 646
power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since
up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers 642
and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes 641
no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the 701
Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the
wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the
paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army
rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government.

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the 175
colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and 642
workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them
aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to 641
young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto
president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other
than by military dictatorship.

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of 175
the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 643

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[2] The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reelection, some six years with no reelection.

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175 choice of a leader. Not gifted with administrative ability, Hérard
643 blundered first by imprisoning one of the most popular Negro
leaders in the country, thereby turning much of the population of
the South against him. Next, learning of conspiracies in the Spanish
[669] end of the island, he tried to stamp out revolt by exile and jail sentences,
only to precipitate there a real revolution for independence.
In his fight against the Dominican separatists he was roundly defeated,
and his prestige sank rapidly to the vanishing point. Within
two months after his inauguration, he had only one third of the
island left over which to attempt to rule. Within a year he was out of
power altogether and with him the colored people.

175 The Revolution of 1844, although supported by certain old friends
669 of Boyer, was chiefly a movement of Negroes—followers of the
imprisoned black, Salomon; peasants from the South who had been
promised much by the previous year's revolutionaries and had got
nothing; and particularly the Negro army clique. The significant part
of the new revolution was its announced purpose, to lessen the influence
of the colored group in government, to have a black president,
and to dispossess certain reputedly well-to-do citizens by
[643] dividing their estates among the people. Quickly successful, the
insurgents promoted to the presidency the illiterate octogenarian
black general, Guerrier, who in Christophe's kingdom had been
Duke of Marmalade[3] and Duke of Avancé.

175 For the first time in a quarter-century the Negro element was
again in the saddle, where it was to remain for the next fifteen years.
643 Everyone recognized Guerrier's personal courage and admired the
662 common sense which made him prefer conciliation to unnecessary
violence as a method of government, but the colored people were
shocked at having to live under the rule of another black ex-slave.
The idea evoked grim memories. Knowing Guerrier's addiction to
drink, the colored faction managed to make him a tool for their own
use, so that his brief administration, ending with his death in 1845,
was generally known as a "government of understudies." Guerrier
was followed in the presidency by another black, likewise an octogenarian:
175 Louis Pierrot, the handsome brother-in-law of King
643 Christophe. But Pierrot was even more ignorant than Guerrier and

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[554] [3] This title generally evokes amusement among non-Haitians. Christophe had merely named his peers after districts whose names had been given by French planters in the eighteenth century. Another of his noblemen was a Count of Limonade.

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already showed signs of senile dementia; his tyrannical crotchets speedily raised up a revolt against him, and in 1846 he gave way to still another black, General Riché. Like his two predecessors, Riché was aged and illiterate. Nevertheless, he began his rule auspiciously by putting an end to dictatorship and surrounding himself with wise counselors. In 1847, just when the country was beginning to appreciate his good qualities, he died a victim of drugs taken to increase his vigor. 175 643

These four presidents, who had among them ruled less than four years, did not appreciably alter the social situation, for they had all been preoccupied with the suppression of revolutions. But Haiti was still in a position to take some definite step toward economic progress, education of the people, conciliation of the antagonistic colored and black elements. Because of a stupid whim, the country was precipitated down exactly the opposite path. The Senate gathered to select Riché's successor found itself unable to rally a majority vote for any candidate; whereupon one Senator proposed the name of an ignorant, entirely unillustrious, black general, Faustin Soulouque. The chamber immediately gave him a majority, for the supporters of each candidate saw in this complete nonentity a chance for another "government by understudies," in which they themselves would actually rule. When the Senatorial delegation arrived to inform Soulouque of his election, that unimpressive Negro, lying stretched out in his hammock, refused at first to take it seriously. He had more than once been the victim of practical jokes, and this looked like a particularly malicious one.[4] It took persuasion to convince him that he was indeed the new president of Haiti.

Soulouque's accession to power marked the beginning of a twelve-year nightmare for Haiti. During his first year of office the new president walked warily over the unfamiliar terrain. Those who had named him for their own ends felt justified in their scheme, for each opposing group still looked forward to controlling the government with Soulouque as a front. Meanwhile, however, the President had been carefully observing everything that went on around him, arriving at his own judgment of men and measures.

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[4] Many years before, Boyer had prophesied a period of disorder in Haiti and is reported to have said that in such a time "any man in Haiti might become president, even that stupid Negro over there," indicating Soulouque. It is told that Soulouque mumbled, "Please, Mr. President, don't make a fool of me." [159]

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Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. [625] By means of a well-organized body of secret police, he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

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The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

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In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled
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as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, 175
increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, 643
and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over 652
the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so 669
unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall.

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the 175
political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men 643
became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the 178
American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following
Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army 564
under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits.

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were 175
changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the 643
presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more 66
were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined.

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their suc- 175
cessors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if 642
the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over 671
by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth
century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made 692
it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers.

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, 175
did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in 178
colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of
Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five 433
years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant 565
population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 489

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178 fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of
élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding
565 enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a
433 peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued,
439 unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the
mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided
[423] among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became
[428] smaller.

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the
175 slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of
643 Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevita-
566 bility of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring
423 the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom.
On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was
175 deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North
643 not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped
423 to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were
doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate
income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one
part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the
175 basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land
643 in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing
421 and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard
423 was the first president openly to admit that many government lands
had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality
to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters
register their claims, announcing that within a short time there
would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony
except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however,
for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal
documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no
reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity
and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

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[5] By a law of September 23, 1844.

[6] Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship 175
would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual 652
indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen
acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The [171]
straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution.

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration 175
of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had 643
finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, 671
Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educa- 423
tional. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen
of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked [648]
money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated.

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

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[7] See above, pp. 70–71.

[8] Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

[9] J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites [114]
these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le* [423]
retour à la terre, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete.

● 175 proprietor in the true sense of the word, for he might not change his
643 crops and cultivate bananas, potatoes, yams, peas, or other food-
671 stuffs."[10] Critics of Salomon point out that these conditional grants
were designed to make of the peasant a simple fiscal workman for
423 the state, to force him once more to labor for the public rather than
for himself. The legislators of 1883 were preoccupied not with the welfare of the peasant, but solely with the increase of production and of fiscal revenue.

The law of 1883, then, like the Code Rural of 1826, fell into desuetude. The peasant was canny enough to see that passing a law did not change realities: he might still squat on government land and yet not be thrown off by the government. Both Boyer's Code and Salomon's law, although of entirely different inspiration, tried to regiment the Haitian peasant in agricultural lines beneficial to state finances but uncongenial to himself.

175 Up to the time of the American Occupation of 1915, there were
no other measures of much influence upon the status of the peasant.
423 The whole impulse of the common people seemed to be toward the
acquisition of plots of land for themselves. By the indifference or impotence of the state, they were allowed to install themselves upon government lands, there to found families and pass on the property upon which they had settled. Thus occurred what might be called a "natural"—certainly unplanned and automatic—development of small property. At first it came at the expense of the great domains; next, through allowing state leases to expire and be given cheaply into the hands of small farmers; finally there were the grants and sales at low prices to thousands of soldiers.

Time validated the peasants' claims, but the state has never formally done so. Legally it might be argued that only a small fraction of the population of Haiti has an indisputable right to the land on which it lives. By strict interpretation most of the peasants are still squatters whom the government might dispossess. The American Occupation, in view of this confusion, tried in businesslike fashion to survey the land and establish property rights. The task proved so extremely difficult that it was soon given up. It met with the stubborn refusal of the peasants to state their claims or take any interest in legalizing their rights. No administration has been foolhardy enough

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[10] Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti*, p. 45.

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion."[11] 175 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot. 565 [162]

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group. [178]

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the 565 369

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[11] The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman." [181] [421] [425] [423] [24]

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[p. 99]

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CASTES SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF 1915

IN 1915 American Marines entered Haiti. One of the major 175
reasons for their intervention may have been economic; cer- 648
tainly this explanation or accusation has been frequently made by 642
opponents of American dollar diplomacy. Nevertheless, the ground was well prepared by political incompetency in Haiti in the years preceding 1915, and the reason given to the world by American statesmen to justify the Occupation was essentially a political one: Haiti was in a state of anarchy.

As has been abundantly shown, Haiti never had a semblance of 175
democracy. From its beginning the country was governed either by 642
a despot—the president, who might or might not be benevolent—or by an oligarchy. The failure of Haitian politics from 1843 onward was the inability of the titular ruler and the oligarchy to work in harmony; indeed, the oligarchy was continually divided against itself. Only three of Haiti's presidents from 1843 to 1915 were more than mediocre statesmen.[1] It is merely a question of degree, whether such phrases as "political and economic stagnation" and "social inertia" are more accurately descriptive than words like decay and degeneration.

A brief résumé of politics between 1900 and 1915 will set the stage 175
for a view of the Occupation in relation to the development of caste. 643

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[1] With this judgment by a foreigner Haitians may obviously disagree. In the 642
author's opinion the presidents Geffrard (1859–67), Salomon (1879–88), and Hyppo-
lite (1889–96) were relatively distinguished men. To Geffrard may be credited the 175
following: increase of educational facilities; construction of much-needed public 643
works; an attempt to form a true middle class, even by importing Negroes from the
United States; reduction of the size of the army by half; healing of a sixty-year breach 65
with the Holy See, so that Haiti might once again have approved priests; the opening of closed ports to commerce; and improvement of agricultural methods. Salomon was an educated man with European experience; his achievements were to create a national bank, establish a sound currency, retire the public debt, lower tariffs, bring in schoolteachers from France, open rural schools, bring Haiti into the International Postal Union. Hyppolite's chief triumphs were in the field of public works—much-needed buildings, bridges, docks, telephone and telegraph lines.

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The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896–1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902–8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908–11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

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For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were involved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

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With the question of America's justification in the matter of occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

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[2] J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 338.

[3] Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

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American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite 128
effects upon the social life of the country. 648

One of the most immediately observable results was the termina- 175
tion of the long political domination by the blacks, and reëstablish- 648
ment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents 643
since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930),
and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United 563
States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries.

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of an- 175
other result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends 701
of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a
hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated 648
burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country. 177

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701 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman
648 had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of
177 existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of
125 only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with
652 police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent:
669 the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti.
648 This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon
[743] began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals,
[744] established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only
[365] three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel;
[491] the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses,
[45] one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to
648 the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and
642 had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual 175
Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *caco* (guer- 648
rilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and 642
salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the
Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather
than elimination of military psychology among the people by the
presence of armed Marines.

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest 175
level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on 648
the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern 642
ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was
accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reach- 668
ing Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti.

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in 175
which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with 648
Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward
reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively co- 642
operative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings,
supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally [643]
benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's [159]
"second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American [527]
departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for
now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white super- [563]
vision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them.

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[4] The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

[5] Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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175 648 642 423 563 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 648 563 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere presence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 648 563 144 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nineteen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two [554] decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class.

175 458 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheer- 175
ing when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to 458
see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been
enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to
establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than
ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was [648]
an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's
external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved [652]
rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state
of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression
and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe
have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pen-
nies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present
luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly 175
upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to 648
secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old 466
corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public
works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished 669
peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the 653
roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its sup-
pression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its
train a great deal of ill will.

The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to 175
make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in 648
chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for 423
internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and
permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that
these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few
weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their
local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their
title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably
averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authori-
ties of an alien and interfering government.

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a 175
cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect 648
Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even 177
the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a
people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more
than a century.

175 However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hun-
178 dred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occu-
565 pation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is
829 still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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[114] [829] [6] See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

[114] [829] [7] This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spenser St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preëminence. Pauléus Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai historique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, for the South was least developed under the colonial régime, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1853–60], I, 97.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; 175
he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread 178
the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the 565
travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, 829
"Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical
Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did 175
not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing 648
them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, 177
mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of 563
the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. 829
Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress.

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[8] Witness Marthe Oulié's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], [114]
p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and [829]
enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

[9] "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

[10] See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps [114]
the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, [648]
which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

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[p. 115]

VI

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. *French Colonial Backgrounds*

WHEN France was first establishing a foothold in the New 175
World, religion was one of the consuming passions of 771
the French people. Priests accompanied early explorers, missionaries consecrated their lives to conversion of the Indians; monks, nuns, and parish priests were a vital part of the pioneer settlements of New France. Every family in the mother country hoped that at least one of its sons would devote himself to the service of the Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, par excellence, missionary centuries.

By the time the colony of Saint-Domingue was acquired, however, this religious zeal was on the wane, and just when the colony was becoming prosperous and populous France was entering the phase of her history known as The Enlightenment. Although the growth of the colony is impressive from many points of view, religion is not one of them, for planters intent upon money-making and luxurious living in an exploitative tropical colony gave little energy to spiritual development.[1] The Roman Catholic Church, [792]
being the official church of France, was naturally the only important religious organization of the colony; the congregations authorized to send clergy to Saint-Domingue—Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Jesuits—divided the territory and work between them.

No doubt the fathers did some assiduous work. Official historians of the Roman Church in Haiti give the definite impression that their task was arduous and not very rewarding.[2] The torrid heat, diseases (especially yellow fever), the long distances and poor means of transportation were discouraging enough; until the middle of the eighteenth century there was the added difficulty of the poor human

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[1] It is revealing to see what characteristics of the culture of their mother country [114]
colonists bring with them to a new region. French Canadians, in contrast to French [771]
colonists in Saint-Domingue, kept many more customs of old France. See J. G. Ley- [178]
burn, *Frontier Folkways* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 54–57.

[2] A good account of the inertia of religious life in colonial Saint-Domingue is given [114]
in P. A. Cabon, *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1933), chap. I.

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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
771 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old
[671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

175 Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
793 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the
662 charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
567 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
[792] almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

175 "The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
771 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to
563 France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they roundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for 175
the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon 193
cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not de- 192
signed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion,"
and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the
curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens
and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits
gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-
Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but
none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright
star in the Catholic crown.

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, 175
the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The [556]
universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, [185]
immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a [647]
fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money [661]
made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest [693]
against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Ad- [466]
ministrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges [193]
sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death;
and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social 175
leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion 771
than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, 184
where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the
colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in
separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained
from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make
them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives,
likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing
pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal.
Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it
came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was
little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of
the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century
rather than to religious thinkers.

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, 175
it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the 771
revolt of the slaves (1791).

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[3] Ibid., p. 13.

revolt of the slaves (1791). Priests fled or went into hiding with the
175 other whites, so that Masses lapsed or were said by religious but
771 unordained mulattoes. Upon his accession to power in Haiti Toussaint
643 L'Ouverture made several attempts to rehabilitate religion in
659 the country, for the Church he felt was a stable institution which might help in giving order to the turbulent land. He tried to accomplish the return of priests to the island parishes and churches. There are indications that Toussaint was not himself deeply religious; his pronouncements are formal, but one cannot say that they appear to be deeply felt. In his proclamation of October 10, 1798, announcing the expulsion of the English, he orders thanks to the God of Hosts, recommends to his chiefs of corps that the soldiers pray morning and evening and faithfully attend Mass on Sundays. In a public address he enjoins upon parents the duty of teaching the catechism to their children.

175 The use of Catholicism as an aid to statecraft is apparent in his
659 official dealings with the Church. His constitution of May 9, 1801, states that "the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, is the sole
195 religion publicly professed." To obtain priests he besought the return of many who had fled the slave insurrection; he likewise turned to France, but France at this time was less than ardent in religion; nor were French priests likely to wish to come to an island ruled by blacks, particularly one which Napoleon was quite obviously planning to subdue. Toussaint addressed himself, therefore, to a schismatic abbé, Grégoire by name, in whom he saw a friend. Whether Grégoire might have helped him to establish the Catholic Church firmly as a part of Haitian life, with only a handful of repatriated colonial priests, we cannot know, for in 1802 the final war of independence began and the island, in convulsion, had no time for spiritual matters.

2. *Catholicism in Independent Haiti*

175 Dessalines, the passionate, violent, and licentious founder of the new state, although not an enemy of the Church was not its active
643 friend. In his slaughter of whites he spared several priests who had
659 come to the country under Toussaint's persuasion, either because
195 these clerics were obviously inoffensive or might later prove useful to him. Just as he controlled every other detail of Haitian life, he was determined to direct church affairs. He reserved to himself the right to fix the limits of jurisdiction of each priest and to nominate, even

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action 643
could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first 659
appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major 795
in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of [793]
Saint-Marc.

The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines
did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather 175
planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: 795
"The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article 642
grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination 659
or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral
stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil [582]
and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits [586]
divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined
the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were [848]
granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the 175
next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman 795
Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the
Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to 648
allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were 771
friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous 178
of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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795 ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious
649 duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion
771 existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of
178 Catholicism and folk belief.

On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the
175 Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far
795 as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions,
642 nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's
648 constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it
659 took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art. 35.* The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art. 36.* The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art. 37.* If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature!

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of
[848] mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law
concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a
[871] more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic
Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

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[848]
[871] [4] The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of 175
the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulga- 643
tion of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of 795
Dessalines, he said: 659
642

> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit [871]
> mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will [586]
> again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of [848]
Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the 175
people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again 795
the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three 793
priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King 659
was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed 648
a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

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[5] This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 334–335.

[6] See the law of March 18, 1807.

[7] Law of March 25, 1807.

175 prove. Dessalines had sent a small number of Negro youths to Rome
795 to receive consecration and ordination from the Pope, so that they
793 might return to initiate a black priesthood for the black state. Pius VII
699 (through the interference of Napoleon, it was held by the Haitians)
648 refused to consecrate the aspirants to holy orders, and they had to
return as they had come. Christophe thought to avoid such a snub by presenting His Holiness with a *fait accompli*. Having in his kingdom a Spanish Capuchin named Brelle who had formerly anointed Dessalines emperor, Christophe made this friar head of his reorganized church as "archbishop of Haiti and grand almoner to the King," giving him a "palace" and a yearly income derived from the revenues of his "see." This achieved he asked papal approval, but had sorrowfully to announce, "*Le roi d'Haïti eut la douleur de ne pas même recevoir une réponse de Sa Sainteté et passa outre.*"

Pétion's legislators were even more naïve. Their constitution of 1816 (of course, really the President's) granted to the President the right to have a bishop come to Port-au-Prince "to elevate to the priesthood those young Haitians who feel called to embrace the ecclesiastical state."[8] It was apparently assumed that without the approval of the Pope any bishop could come in and forthwith "make" priests. The insertion of this article in the constitution confesses the disadvantages of schism. The last surviving priests of the old régime, those few who had remained in spite of the breach with Rome, were dying off; no new priests were being sent in; therefore, if the Catholic Church was to endure in the republic, it must have Haitian priests. Certain clerics fleeing political revolutions in South America came to Haiti, but since they spoke French badly, did not improve the religious situation. It was impossible to get sympathetic priests from France, in view of the relations of the two countries at the time. The provision of the 1816 constitution, however childish, was at least an effort to perpetuate the church in Haiti.

It is nowhere recorded that either Pétion or Boyer had any opportunity to persuade a bishop to come and consecrate the desired priests. Deprived of support by the Papal See, in open schism, the Haitian republic was forced to make all regulations governing religious affairs. Boyer carried on various negotiations with Rome looking toward rapprochement, but the schism endured. Organized

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[8] Article 30 of the 1816 constitution.

organized

religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of 175
the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were grow- 795
ing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no 771
real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests.

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic 175
Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was 795
now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. 771
By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, 659
bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." 643
The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests.

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leader- 175
ship, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to 795
be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called
priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy 793
orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to
rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting [114]
Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he

175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and
for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit un-
limited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
651 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
771 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little
184 acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was
nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated
are about where the French were when they left the island. They
believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and atten-
tive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

> are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

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9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set 175
apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president 114
and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I 771
believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside 796
for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed
down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of 184
religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, 175
on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent 795
to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries
as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were 797
met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that
they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was [162]
estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain 175
satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled 795
both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval
of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to 648
do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior 659
group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with 643
recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

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[13] James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

● 175 religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The arch-
795 bishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to
648 the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were
659 Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créole dialect, they
643 did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.
[795]

Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reëstablish the Church.

175 When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president,
771 the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

175 795 648 659 643.

The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed.

175 771

In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm.

175 795 [346]

The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than

175 to try to renovate the old. Gradually the work became established,
795 increasing in scope with the years.
346

It is not necessary to present a detailed history of the work of
175 Catholicism in Haiti since 1860. The most striking feature of these
795 years is its relationship to Vodun, which will be treated shortly.
The progress made by the Church itself can best be seen by a
794 summary of conditions in 1930.

795 Haiti is divided into dioceses named after its principal towns and
162 cities. The population statistics are based upon figures of births covering more than fifty years, and although estimates, they are probably as accurate as any other population statistics for Haiti:

Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince	942,700
Diocese of Cap-Haïtien	453,000
Diocese of Les Cayes	628,000
Diocese of Gonaïves	475,000
Diocese of Port-de-Paix	153,590
Total	2,652,290

793 To care for this large and predominantly illiterate population there are 205 priests,[14] only 8 of whom are Haitians; 105 Brothers; and 366 Sisters.[15] The assiduous educational work of these *religieux* will be discussed in another connection.

794 The country's 10,200 square miles are divided into 112 parishes,
162 which generally correspond to the political communes, although there are several parishes in the larger centres of population. In the rural sections 465 mission chapels are located at strategic points.[16]

550 Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

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[14] Of these, 156 are in charge of parishes or missions (the secular priests). The re-
[794] maining 49 are regular clergy (that is, belonging to a religious or monastic order). All parishes in the diocese of Port-de-Paix and two in Port-au-Prince are in charge of the regular clergy; the other regular monks are doing educational work or other special service connected with the dioceses.

[15] The Brothers are Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne; of the number 83 are
[793] French, 10 French Canadian, 9 Spanish, and 3 Haitian. The Sisters belong to three
[792] congregations: 146 to St. Joseph de Cluny, 198 to Les Filles de la Sagesse, and 22 to Les Filles de Marie.

[16] All the figures cited above are drawn from the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 16–17.

VII

VODUN

1. *Misconceptions*

THE second religion of Haiti is Vodun. It is not mentioned by officials as one of the spiritual assets of the country; its priests wear no regular habit; it has no town churches. Yet it is the living religion of the masses. Catholicism may have official and social sanction; indeed, most peasants do consider themselves as belonging to that faith, yet it is doubtful whether in any other Western country there is so universal an adherence to a common religion as in Haiti to Vodun. 771

If there had been a paid campaign of propagandist misinformation, it is unlikely that more untruths and half-truths could have been put into circulation about this faith of the Haitian people. Moreau de Saint-Méry describes something of it in his classic work on colonial matters, although most of what he tells concerns the dances, which he considered primarily a form of recreation. Pious visitors to Haiti in the early years of independence labeled it simply as a form of superstition and did not bother either to understand or misrepresent it. By the time of Soulouque it was known as a rather definite folk religion, but only after 1863 did what was really a simple set of religious beliefs and practices suddenly become notorious, making Haiti the object of macabre curiosity and of reports whose chief characteristic was gruesomeness. 114 771

In 1863 occurred the *Affaire de Bizoton,* and it may as well be recounted forthwith as the prime origin of all misunderstanding which has pursued Haitian religion—although to emphasize it is like giving an account of Christianity with all the emphasis on witch burnings, torture of heretics, and excesses of bigotry. 175 771

On December 27, 1863, a little girl of Bizoton named Claircine disappeared from home during the absence of her mother. Search for her was futile until after several days it was discovered that she had been killed and used as part of a sinister sacrifice by religious fanatics. An inquest, discreetly managed, resulted in the arrest of fifteen people, of whom eight were longer detained. The trial of

175 these four men and four women began on February 4, 1864, arousing
771 all Port-au-Prince, the local population as well as the foreign legations and consulates. The guilt of the accused was soon evident;
[682] following their complete confessions they were declared guilty of sorcery, cruelty, and murder, and all eight were condemned to death. They were executed on February 13, only six weeks after the crime. What these fanatics had done seemed as horrible to the Haitians as a similar crime would seem to Americans.

Much publicity was given the trial by foreign journalists who, with their flair for making the most of a dramatic tale, added whatever they could pick up by hearsay of the beliefs which had prompted the human sacrifice. The reading public, uncritical and uninformed about Haiti itself, if they gave the lurid accounts a second thought seem to have assumed that such actions were "what one might expect of Negroes." The incident would shortly have passed into that oblivion which awaits sensational news from obscure parts of the world, if it had not been kept alive by the British Minister, who was also an author.

114 In the 'eighties, after retirement from diplomatic service, Sir Spenser St. John wrote a two-volume work called *Hayti, or The*
771 *Black Republic*. It was probably no more egregious in its dramatic account than were scores of other books by Englishmen who, in the latter years of the Victorian era, were discovering darkest Africa, holding dominion over palm and pine, and taking up the white man's burden all over the "heathen" world; but it possessed the literary qualities which made people buy it and discuss with avidity its horrendous details. The adjective "black" in its title seemed almost to refer to the moral characteristics of the people rather than to their skin color. Sir Spenser made a great many accurate, if somewhat one-sided, observations on the customs of the people, giving the public the first readable book in decades about the Haitians. The grisly climax of his story, however, is the *Affaire de Bizoton*. He amassed an astonishing collection of tales, practically all at second-hand, to prove that Vodun (Voodooism, he called it) was the real religion of the Haitians (which it was), and that it was compounded of the vilest superstitions and most fiendish practices, of which the most essential was human sacrifice of "the goat without horns" followed by a cannibalistic communion. Which, needless to say, it was not.

This is the sort of dramatic tale uncritical readers seem to like to

Vodun, therefore, show the Catholic influence, exerted in the main unconsciously. 771 171

Unlike the great religions, Vodun lacks a formal theology. As has been said, no seminary exists for the training of priests and priestesses, no congress or college of fathers states or amends the creed; there is no church court to discipline the individual enthusiast, or catechism for the young; no scriptures or sermons are printed or read to strengthen the faith. Vodun is an informal religion of action, not a formal one of reason. It flourishes because it is malleable, adaptive, suited to the needs of a people living close to nature and without education. To give a single lucid description of this Haitian folk religion, created as it is by everybody and by nobody, is about as possible as to give one description of home life, which varies according to the couple. We may, however, outline the common elements of creed and practice. 794 771

2. *Formative Days*

To say casually that Vodun is African in origin is to say little more than that it does not stem from the great world religions. There is no unity in Africa today; there was still less in the eighteenth century when slaves were being imported into Haiti. At that period it was possible to find a new dialect and a different set of folkways every few miles along the western seacoast. Two slaves from one geographical region (the Gold Coast, for example) might not understand each other or have the slightest predisposition to sympathize with each other's customs. 771 174

Colonial planters experimented with slaves from various regions in Africa, just as they might compare breeds of horses; setting tractability off against originality, brute strength against skill, intelligence against health. In this quest for a perfect slave, Negroes were imported from all parts of the Dark Continent, from Senegal in the northwest around the five thousand miles of seacoast to Mozambique and Madagascar in the east. Partly because trading conditions were more favorable in the Dahomey and Congo regions, and partly because the qualities of Dahomean and Congolese were preferred, Negroes from these two sections soon came to predominate over others in the colony. Whereas "Congo" was merely a geographical term, implying no community of feeling among the natives living 175 567

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567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other,
567 in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This
178 policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or
175 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World
178 beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate
796 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in
771 the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation
535 owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was ostensibly for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion. Although every
171 single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we
174 know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except 771
for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly 171
have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily 174
life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple
black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was
chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the
colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The [776]
Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the [796]
worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. [535]
Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the
validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No
hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these
were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a
Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the
composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever 174
considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a 535
faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. 796
Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly [192]
enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal [114]
diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were
"superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the
word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not
regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use 175
the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their
dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, 669
gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample 567
opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for 202
revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro 793
Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, 771
which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing
but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance
in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one
plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity
of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and
language, by the Vodun background. 114

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been 175
rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who 669
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175 have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But
669 when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against
668 their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revo-
lutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged
leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents.
Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a
part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a
[793] ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hya-
cinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or un-
known, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their
narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict
was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and con-
tradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together
was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their
Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint
L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

776 As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the
rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their
793 own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the
761 spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that
782 when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to
781 explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually,
failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the pro-
tecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them
were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-
Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman
Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial
[789] patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the
general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success,
would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

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[171] [781] [8] A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

[114] [781] [9] The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be 175
turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it 771
still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, 114
Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the [787]
occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman [789]
who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand
without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his
inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year;
and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice
of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but
implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as 114
a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, 771
plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of 781
papas, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the
vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a
Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making
soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves 175
against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to 643
overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently inno- 796
cent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance 671
gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and 659
Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to 669
drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an 794
inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon
at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he 798
forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled [illegible]

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[10] M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.

[11] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.

[12] In an order of January 4, 1800.

The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
796 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
671 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious
659 man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
798 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
771 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the
offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew
how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of
other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the
meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say.
He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but
rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African
fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
643 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
794 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions
659 one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's
798 innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose
curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
796 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
771 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
114 celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions
the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning
ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of
victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine
were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice.
Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

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[13] Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
[14] See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90-91.
[15] Zachary Macaulay, *Haiti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90-91.

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African obi and the Catholic priest both come in for a share of their respect and homage.[16] 114 796

This is the usual tone of the comment on native religion, as when Candler in 1842 speaks of funerals in country places "with the *rites of heathenism*, such as are practised to this day in the heart of Africa."[17] Of these conventional criticisms of Vodun, one of the more thoughtful is Bonneau's: 771

> The shocking phantasmagorias of fetishism paralyzed the intellectual development of the African race for six thousand years; superstition is in some sort inherent in its nature. The [Haitian] people need to break with their past. Catholicism has been prodigiously patient and courageous, but it does not possess the necessary corrective for extirpating the fetishism which immobilizes the black population. The Catholic Church, by fractioning the religious sentiment, by forcing thought to diffuse itself in order to take in a thousand secondary details, by imposing on the people practices without number which tend to materialize the cult, by placing as intermediaries between God and men a multitude of saints and genies, encourages and fortifies the tendencies, even the most deplorable ones, of the black race, whose intellect has been shrouded in mist for centuries precisely because it can grasp only with difficulty the relationships between things and ideas, tending rather to lose itself in details than to rise to general and synthetic conceptions.[18]

If the fixing of periods has any clarifying value, one might set the stages of the development of Vodun as follows: 175 771

1730–1790, its Emergence, when the importation of slaves was steadily increasing, with a gradual ascendancy of Dahomean ideas; 794

1790–1800, its practical Testing in the fires of revolt when, out of apparent innocence and enforced secrecy, Vodun effectively united the slaves in their action for freedom;

1800–1815, its Suppression under the black rulers;

1815–1850, its quiet Diffusion to all the people and assumption of the form it now exhibits.

The middle of the nineteenth century was the turning point. Before then it had been so to speak in gestation; under Soulouque, then ruling, it publicly emerged. Until the mid-century élite people had 175 771 794

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[16] Dr. J. Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 273.
[17] John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 166.
[18] A. Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès—son avenir*, pp. 24–25.

175 771 794 ignored when they did not frown upon it. As we have seen, the aristocratic Madiou spoke of Vaudoux as "the sorcerers of our country districts," and President Riché in 1846 whenever he heard a suspect drum, went himself to silence it. Under Soulouque, on the other hand, the élite did not dare to show contempt for practices so dear to His Imperial (if benighted) Highness; indeed, one priestess of Vodun then boasted, "If I were to beat the sacred drums and march through the city, not one from the Emperor downwards but would humbly follow me."

175 771 794 798 For at least a century Vodun had developed with no real obstacles beyond the twenty-year prohibition of the Three Great Blacks. The white planters in the colonial era had been too indifferent and imperceptive to stop it, while the élite of the republic were too proud to concern themselves. The Catholic Church, which might have been its most effective enemy, was too lax and too much hampered in colonial times to curb "slave superstition," while from 1805 until 1860 because of the schism no real Catholic priesthood labored in the country. All this changed after Soulouque: the schism was healed; priests of true missionary spirit came to Haiti; the *Affaire de Bizoton* gave the enemies of Vodun a focal point of attack. Since 1860 the Catholic Church has not ceased its war against the folk religion. Occasionally, as in the days of Toussaint, a ruler has suppressed it. Such executives have probably known, however, that it was much too late to eradicate Vodun. It had decades in which to send down its roots. Efforts against it have about the same effect as the persecution of the early Christians—a strengthening of the faith of believers, an outward submission to restrictive rules but increased devotion to rites now performed secretly, and in the case of Vodun at least, an added attraction to the cult because of this very secrecy. At least one president has been known to be an ardent worshiper. Today, much as the élite turn up their noses at Vodun, there are many who look to it in their hour of need, when the Catholic faith seems to fail or medicine proves helpless.

3. *Vodun Belief*

771 The sincere Vodun worshiper is generally an illiterate peasant or humble laborer who would never bother his mind to formulate a definite statement of his beliefs. Because there is no clearing-house

789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to
cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage.
Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain
irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen
on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act,
consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the
• [175] glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days
[304] of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not
hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly
handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice
777 is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a
789 special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon
done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with
Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative
trade through their reputation for effective charms against the
maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that ouanga is

> [192] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maize, amulets, pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The Ouanga, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the ouanga.[37]

The ouanga is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every ouanga there is a garde, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the ouanga causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting garde is that called a *drogue*,
789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or
bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with
which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

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37. Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 319.

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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might 171
sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. 771
If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain
those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too
proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty
Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much
misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to
deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all,
and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict [778]
between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even
if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In 175 ●
the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found 177
it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train 771
all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some
rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African 794
ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach- 565
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[1] This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 177]

IX

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

TOLERANT understanding of the ways of alien people is rare in matters relating to sex. Occasionally we may regard marital and sexual practices which differ from our own as amusing or ridiculous; more frequently we find them distasteful and disgusting. A long religious heritage has implanted in us a definite personal morality, familiar in Puritanism and in the codes of the great majority of early American pioneers. Accompanying and dominated by this religious aspect has been the legal idea of sexual morality. A middle-class tradition of private property, hence of orderly marriages legally recognized, has schooled us for centuries to approve certain moral and sexual rules: monogamic marriage, children born in wedlock, a public wedding ceremony by approved authorities, censure of sexual relations which might confuse the passage of property. Although sympathetic tolerance for foreign ways has never been an outstanding American characteristic, it is least evident in connection with divergent sexual practices. We do not remind ourselves of the utilitarian basis of a part of our own sexual codes.

Where people have economic and social backgrounds different 577
from those of Western Europe and the United States, other codes 171
will prevail. Elements which have made American moral standards
what they are were lacking or appeared in different form in Haiti. 831
Instead of middle-class European tradition there was African tribal practice; instead of diffused small private properties there was slavery; instead of the Puritan notion that sex relations were in general sinful was the less rigorous view that sexual intercourse was entirely normal; instead of the example of monogamous family life constantly before the minds of children growing up, there was the example of libertinage among lofty whites and laxness among the blacks.

Nothing in the experience of the slave régime could have predis- 175
posed toward orderly marriage these people, soon to become Hai- 567
tians. Certain masters actually prohibited weddings among their
slaves, while most others discouraged it, since the development of 581
family ties among the blacks would only have made for complication

175 567 581 [794] when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues. Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 567 588 [843] As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 567 588 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 565 581 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

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[567] [581] [1] Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent, religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live together as a family.

themselves and their families economically and socially. Property 175
was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their 565
heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their 581
children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders.

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half- 175
million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that 581
European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for
monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If [583]
the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue
of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the [585]
Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we under-
stand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's [837]
woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements [855]
almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves.

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned 175
social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a 643
time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and 188
divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the 582
same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty.

[2] Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 23.

644 The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to
175 attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Tous-
643 saint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States.
648 Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex
831 conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and
175 first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the
643 economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense
831 against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuous-
[582] ness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black
175 general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lec-
643 tured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet
159 showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his
831 favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

114 The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable
643 paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him
159 on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his
831 authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

> Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by 643
> actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon 159
> as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in 831
> order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3]

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western 175
country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken 831
up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the 581
white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind.

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were 175
known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of 848
infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in 428
matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs.

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[3] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 219.

175 512 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legitimacy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

671 848 [581] "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28, 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 671 848 428 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] [423] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is 175
likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence 671
of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly 848
unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the 428
revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent
a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that
since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into
freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of 175
the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive 581
luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without
it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only 671
the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of 565
the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them
to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one
born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at 175
the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, 593
and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away 671
from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his
mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal
relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate"
has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times,
the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother
lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently 175
weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck
at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for 671
incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. 586
Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic
practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking
an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one
spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not
allowed in 1803 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion 175
of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever 643
Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely 648
sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

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[4] According to the testimony of Madiou, op. cit., III, 216.

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643 be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of
648 blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the
apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage
643 (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage,
582 and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an
671 evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried
581 also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal
[595] marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged
weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal
671 marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing
848 that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children
428 encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one
of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reëstablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

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[5] Law of March 23, 1807.
[6] Madiou, op. cit., III, 422.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

000 it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly
well-to-do.

671 The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the
moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte
581 de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners.
114 Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is
175 unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted."
[584] All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried.
Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe
had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his
people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out
of their African and colonial backgrounds.

175 While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North,
184 Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law
671 during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of mar-
581 riage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal
581 marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children.
423 The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if
[585] property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in
their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex rela-
105 tions have developed. From African tradition came family life, the
175 importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wed-
178 ding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent;
58 from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family
59 with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this
421 marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast
to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from
Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism;
from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

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[7] A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 186]

X

HOME LIFE OF THE ÉLITE

565 581 ONE brief characterization of the élite might be that they are those who carefully observe the proprieties. The proprieties are those of France, and among them is "common sense" in marriage.

175 565 831 581 People of privilege in colonial times, which were the fountainhead of élite tradition, lived at ease and did not concern themselves with manual labor. Nor were they burdened by puritanical codes of sexual morality, but on the contrary enjoyed sex relations with whatever attractive women came their way. But they would have thought it sheer folly to allow momentary delight to interfere with the very practical matter of choosing a wife. Marriage meant increasing one's fortune, strengthening one's social position and connections, establishing one's children. Romance was as irrelevant to all this as to choosing a business partner. This attitude of the French planters, current even in France of the present day, was the standard for freedmen.

175 565 588 581 Even when wealth was most plentiful in colonial society it had not been always easy to find the proper wife for an affranchi youth. For a man to remain single, however, did not mean that he remained celibate. He might, on the contrary, contract a fairly permanent informal union of love, while discreetly refraining from a marriage which would jeopardize his own or his family's status. Such informal unions were not generally regarded as immoral. Good taste, it was felt, was a sufficient guide in all matters of sex outside of marriage.

175 565 581 The unsettled condition of the colony between the slave insurrection of 1791 and the achievement of independence in 1803–4 did not change the affranchi concept of suitable marriage. During the brief two-year rule of Dessalines, the ideal of propriety in marriage remained the same in spite of the Emperor's efforts to undermine the importance of legal weddings and the legitimacy of children. Pétion, upon his accession in 1806, showed himself a true member of the mulatto aristocratic group—indifferent to the morals of the masses so long as custom settled their problems for them, and content with the marriage traditions of the élite. He said publicly what was neces-

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565 sary for a president to say as to proper respect for moral principles,
581 then left morality to take care of itself.

During Pétion's time and that of Boyer there came into common
175 usage the convenient term "*plaçage*" to describe the extramarital
588 unions of respectable people. "Concubinage" was a crude word, with
565 definite overtones of disapprobation; plaçage was more indirect, and
581 carried no connotation of disrepute. Briefly, plaçage was the union of a man and a woman for pleasure, companionship, and a measure of home life, without the assumption by either person of any legal obligations. A man might make as many of these tentative unions as his disposition, his finances, and his tact dictated. Often enough they were with women of his own social class, for Haiti had an excess of women over men; but generally they were contracted with pleasing women of the lower social orders. Young men not yet financially able to marry, younger brothers whose inheritance was too small to support a family, husbands who had married for practical purposes rather than for love, and eagerly lustful men—these were the usual participators in plaçage.

Although for a woman a church wedding might be the height of ambition, and proper parents tried to see that their daughters achieved it, there came to be a feeling that no disgrace attached to being *placée*. Certainly at the beginning a wife outranked a placée, just as in colonial New England a wife outranked an old maid; but to be placée was a far better lot in Haiti than to be a spinster in Massachusetts Bay colony. No one would have thought of calling a placée by so inaccurate a term as "mistress"; still less would anyone have assailed her moral standing. A man who had a mistress might keep his arrangements with her secret; but plaçage unions were, or came to be, quite open. The one great flaw in the arrangement was that near middle age a man might cease to care about his union with the woman. Foresight and adaptability were the only safeguards against this fate.

565 Nowhere else in the Western World has there been so little actual
581 marriage in proportion to the population as in Haiti. Whether tech-
588 nically it is correct to speak of peasant unions as examples of plaçage is a matter of opinion; certainly the peasants rarely marry. Thousands of Haitian couples in all walks of life could be found at any period since 1804 living quietly together from youth to age, bringing up a family of children with as much order as do others who have had a

581 wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called
565 (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such
588 couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.

175 Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and
114 justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy
581 in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the
588 Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must
565 confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *connubium injustum* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept
> [162] numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

175 Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage,
581 just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which
588 seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

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[1] *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.

[2] *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–31.

175 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely
581 glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the state-
588 ment of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

> [114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a
114 desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color preju-
581 dice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered
588 an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine
583 law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes moeurs*," not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from
581 the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the
588 President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accom-
643 panied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

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[3] *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.
[4] *La Géographie de l'Île d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

175 581 588 643 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 581 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 565 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

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[5] *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177-178.

[114] [581] [554] [6] John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position resulting from the recognition that in a family the persons had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 193]

XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not 162
merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general con-
viction among local scholars and priests who know the
country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investi- [659]
gator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in [163]
which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many
more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher [165]
for females than for males.

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the 175
colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more 162
than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 100,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821-26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1]

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts 163
and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of [114]
females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set

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[1] These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 112. [114]

[2] One physician thinks that the rate would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-filles" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population. [163] [55]

remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most 174
natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. 241
Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The 574
phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean 476
coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 538

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. 241 175 462 701 In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community.

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

> The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

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114 461 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women
462 of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not
175 mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market,
443 which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source
175 of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development
441 that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came
462 to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work.
466 From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional
102 reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

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[9] *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.

[10] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 34.

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702 446

reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight. 175 441 462

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were cheerful and happy."[21] 175 441

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the prepossession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge. 114 461

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[22] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

> the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

[21] John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 25, 26.
[22] *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti*, p. 336.

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> 114 461 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coërcion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

> [462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

● 175 241 208 178 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 461 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

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[13] *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 159–160.

[14] *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.

[15] Joseph Balthazar Inginac, "*Culture du caféier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.

[16] *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.

[17] *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, p. 12.

the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

175 701 461 One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers.

174 462 562 567 Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant.

164 461 Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women; yet the latter were steadily industrious.

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

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Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

• 175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
281 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[349] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a
[333] man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

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[18] Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 130.

[p-211]

XII

POLITICS

TO write of the politics of one country in the language of 140
another is almost certain to foster misconceptions. Political terminology grows out of national and local experience, so that a Liberal party may actually be reactionary, a Radical group conservative, and a Conservative bloc progressive; the names are entirely the product of time and circumstance. And to generalize upon the shades of political opinion in a country is almost surely to do violence to partisan sentiment, as well as to truth itself. If, on the other hand, one attempts to deal justly with each development of political thought, one is immediately caught in the web of tedious detail.

All these reflections apply to Haiti. Her political history is end- 175
lessly complicated, not only in the sequence of events, but in the 114
intertwining prejudices of color, caste, sectionalism, education, heritage. Haitian writers have concerned themselves more frequently with politics than with any other subject; their diagnoses and remedies are familiar to the thought of élite citizens. Yet it is doubtful whether these authors have ever affected the political reality, except possibly in 1843. Theory and practice have consistently diverged: both form a part of the political complexion of Haiti, yet to treat either in detail would require an overbalanced discussion of political matters in a country nine tenths of whose people are normally unconcerned with politics. Let us then try to discover briefly how rulers have achieved and lost power, and how they have managed their government.

Of all the social institutions which had to find their own shape in 175
1804 upon the achievement of independence, the one for which the 178
people as a whole had least preparation was government. Assuming 64
the major institutions of a society to consist of economic life, government, religion, and marriage, one realizes the problems which faced the free Haitians in all of these categories. Satisfactory or partial, we have seen the solutions arrived at in all respects except government—solutions which modified and adapted old French colonial practice or African tradition. Neither French nor African guides would serve in politics, however. People who have just thrown off the yoke of a

175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 641 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

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[1] Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

[2] It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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Immediately a division of political opinion was evident, one which 175
was to persist throughout the century. No one denied the inevitability 643
in 1804 of making Dessalines the head of state: he was the
victorious commander, clearly the most powerful man in Haiti. The
division of opinion arose over the manner in which he should rule,
whether as military dictator, or as a responsible president. Dessalines
settled the matter peremptorily—if only for the time being—by
asserting himself as a dictator.

The issue did not die with his decision, however, for it had deep 175
roots. Supporting Dessalines wholeheartedly was the group of generals 642
who were all Negroes, all ex-slaves, all practically illiterate. The
three most influential of these blacks were Christophe, later to succeed [663]
his general; Chanlatte, and Boisrond-Tonnère. Those who
preferred a government in which the president shared power with a
legislature of important men were, on the contrary, almost all
affranchis of the old régime, therefore the most cultured and educated
men in the country. Most of them were mulattoes or at least of a
lighter complexion than the Negroes, although of course some blacks
adhered to their position. The leaders of this group were Pétion,
Boyer, Inginac, and Gérin. This division of opinion went back even
into the decade preceding independence, when the island, free of
slavery, was still technically under the rule of France, and the ex-slave
Toussaint had to fight and conquer the mulatto leader Rigaud
before he could establish his rule as dictator.

For a brief moment after independence, all differences were reconciled, 175
since all had been united in a common cause against the enemy. 643
Dessalines was then commanding in the Artibonite Valley, and 642
Christophe in the North; two of Rigaud's former lieutenants, Pétion
and Geffrard, commanded in the West and South. Apparently there 66
was genuine respect among these men for each other. Dessalines, for
example, with evident sincerity calls his colleague Pétion "that man
of upright heart." The unity was short-lived, however. Not only
was it evident that Dessalines meant to rule like an African despot-chief,
taking advice only when he liked it; it was even more plain
that through his cruelty, impetuosity, and crudeness he was bent on
isolating Haiti from all contacts with the culture and polish of the
outer world. Pétion and his group looked on with pained disgust as
he indulged his violence against the whites who had hopefully remained
in the country; the general's bloody procession throughout

175 the land, leaving a trail of misery and death, was an augury of what
643 to expect from a tyrant. They opposed his plan to destroy all coastal
642 towns and move the people inland where, protected by their mountains, they would be immune to foreign attack and foreign ideas.
66 They resented their loss of property by state expropriation, and could not fail to be shocked by the grim exultation of Boisrond-Tonnère: "To draw up the act of independence, we used the skin of a white man for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for pen!"[3]

Even without such cogent objections to Dessalines the mulattoes would have opposed his dictatorship, for as intellectuals and as social élite they wanted a real share in the government. For this they had agitated since before 1791, and it would be a grim irony if after fourteen years of intermittent conflict the successful expulsion of whites should be followed by a continued exclusion of mulattoes from the government. It would be a worse irony to throw off the white yoke only to take on a black one. When in 1805 Dessalines made himself emperor they asked for the creation of a nobility, thinking to share the rule with him; but the Emperor's curt "*Moi seul je suis noble*" dashed this hope. Although detailed proof is lacking, it is generally accepted in Haiti that the conspiracies against the Emperor's life began with this intransigent statement.

Here, then, was the issue which in half a dozen varying forms was to split political opinion for decades: rule by a single tyrant vs. rule by the cultured class. It even made two nations of one between the years 1806 and 1820.

When Dessalines was assassinated, a Constituent Assembly was
175 summoned to draw up a new constitution and select a new ruler.
642 The mulattoes were in control of the Assembly which under Pétion's skilful guidance sat at the mulatto stronghold, Port-au-Prince, and there drew up a constitution assuring the limitation of the president's power by a Senate, and requiring election and reëlection of the
[667] president instead of permitting him life tenure. This achieved, the Assembly dutifully elected the black general Christophe president of Haiti. However, belonging as he did to Dessalines' school of thought—unrestricted rule by a strong man—he indignantly refused to be bound by such a constitution; when the Assembly, instead of yielding

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[3] This statement is cited, with evident distaste, by Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 114.

to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. 175 642 [687]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics. 175 665

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4] 175 642 433 656

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures. 175 642 665 646 643

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 175 642 643

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[4] The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amazingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

175 642 643 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the kind of government the upper class favored.

175 642 643 692 President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He had formed his views of government principally upon French models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] [661] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them, he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[3]

800 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

[643] [3] The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessors. The hitch came because he was not of their calibre. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

Boyer was over-thrown by the Revolution of
1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt 175
for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative govern- 669
ment and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of
special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the
élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in
word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843.

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had 175
granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning 642
taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, 643
hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began 652
to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all
projects favorable to the development of public instruction and im- 661
provements which might cause further expenditure. By temperament
he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him
alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand
reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to
smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their
differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sym-
pathies of many once-devoted officials.

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the 175
younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent 643
reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement
of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher 665
ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life,
were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for
since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On
the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded
by those admirable great functionaries left over from the govern-
ment of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed
their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation
mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary
opposition.

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their 175
education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political dis- 665
cussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first 871
decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for 664

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[6] By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

[7] "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental
inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare,*
204 *Le Télégraphe, La Feuille de Commerce.* Their sustained criticism kept
208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their
diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps:*

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the
664 mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and sometimes passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

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[8] Hérard Dumesle, Laudun, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced 175
the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] 643
The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion 665
that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter ap-
peared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most 646
important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves,
Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South
avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets."
At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were
given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant
speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent
of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way
into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining
Boyer's government.

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his 175
presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal 731
blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of
5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in
1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake
in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-
Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire
which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging
which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to [664]
Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at
the government.

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of 175
Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discon- 668
tent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely through-
out the South the ringing *Manifesto* by Praslin, a résumé of the
charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures.
When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive
committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as
president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the 175
Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the 669
South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision,
spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru-

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[9] The most important of the excluded deputies were Dumai Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Ponthieux, Dorsainville Dumont.

[10] At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

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669 ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolution-
[645] aries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.
[159] Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in
their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new
175 president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitu-
642 tion which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their
648 mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the
669 defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing
two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

175 A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When
642 Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro
643 within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti
found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

175 In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the
665 conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties.
565 Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those
believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

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[175]
[669]
[11] The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege 175
of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of 665
black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose 565
never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[12]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one 175
opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes 565
who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African 646
state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging 666
their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians 664
suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite 175
suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; 661
Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of 565
their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were 643
blacks, and the two most tyrannical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary insti- 175
tutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had 643

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[12] It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege assured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses. [646] [171]

Pétion and Boyer had

175 suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since
643 class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their
646 virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard,
642 for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim
empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his
campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads
[669] with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving
it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

175 The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883,
665 after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer
669 Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President,
Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections,
[666] resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

600 The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

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[13] Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and 175
scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some 669
of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, 668
went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than 648
endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social 642
life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a 643
change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was 175
obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign 643
office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for 645
Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period 565
when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed
toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's [648]
position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

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Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing 642
international complications in its wake. The American Marines 648
occupied the country. An era was ended.

It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of 175
Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders 643
seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob- see

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[14] Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1882); Léonidas Laventure, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haïti, vivra-t-elle?* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

178 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

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[15] *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 183.

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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more 175
pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 871
1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the 565
élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of 658
the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any 175
flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The 871
earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigor- 64
ated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people 66
had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness 175
could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal 181
ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic be- 178
havior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

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[16] This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 176 ff.

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178 prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new
181 embroidery on the old theme of sterility.[17]

175 The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already
565 been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

175 Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions
669 which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "impor-
701 tant" ones between 1806 and 1879;[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

176 Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism.
369 Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more
669 narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

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[17] Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), I, 230, 243, 250–252, develops this theme at length.

[18] *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, 175
ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. 669
Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with 649
this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By bor- 457
rowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise [491]
to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor [505]
country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the *Môle Saint Nicolas*, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Mole has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was 175
vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's adminis- 665
tration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady per-
sistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the 208
successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given élite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the élite presidents of Haiti.

In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political [649]
debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign

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[19] See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Montague, *op. cit.*, chap. IX.

175 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism
665 which before then would have been academic. The élite were back
208 again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the
648 immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent, impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclu-
643 sions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation,
642 so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer
648 prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first
662 time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reëlection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy,
648 Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her
666 first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated
the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and
642 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,387 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to 175
popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded 648
found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power 642
came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically un-
broken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency 175
ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once 643
more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince;
instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men
who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of under-
standing Haiti's relation to international economics and politics.

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti 175
arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had 642
taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility
productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal
situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and
the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with
assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political [661]
office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own [666]
advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done
to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and [565]
education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical
education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a
graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported [643]
by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One
can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite [565]
for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase
of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural
Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the
peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies
political life.[20]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no 178
light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by 65
education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricul-
tural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to

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[20] Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, [114]
especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon [565]
the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority.

178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of
643 President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
642 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
648 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
241 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reëlection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haiti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent
648 had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[21] Opposition to Lescot 643
comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the 645
Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of 642
politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In 105
every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong 643
men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolu- 642
tions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled 645
neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsi- 642
bilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

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[21] The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United 249
States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American 433
government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an ex- 654
perimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results 645
were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of [312]
an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation proj- [491]
ects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

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QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

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The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

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In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It sometimes happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts [293] of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named 693
by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a 695
worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and 641
a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular 114
feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts 175
thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. 647
I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really 171
matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

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[3] Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271–272.

[4] "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 453.

114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
● 175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a
175 work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will
improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general
for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the
forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the
forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the
563 same military organization was preserved, and the same system of
forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government.
One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this
territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were
sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic
175 name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
642 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
[463] inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was
not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical
art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the
old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and
self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the
breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No
one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good
[428] son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to
disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

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[5] Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

[6] He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

175 put little stress upon strictly legal marriage, he did try to foster
642 family ties and to strengthen family life.

1806. Pétion's first constitution, drawn up with his fellow mulattoes. [643] Taking his model from the United States constitution, he established a republic with a president and a legislature, although the president of Haiti had greater relative powers than the president of the United States. He might be reëlected, but was not to be a dictator.

1807. Christophe's reply to the mulattoes, establishing the "state" of Haiti which should (he hoped) overwhelm the "republic" of Haiti. His political and social systems were in few respects different from those of Toussaint and Dessalines.

1811. Christophe's second constitution, establishing his kingdom and creating a nobility, but otherwise maintaining the forced-labor system.

1816. Pétion's second constitution, the longest-lived in Haitian history. Having been several times reëlected president he now adopted the principle of a life presidency, with the right of the incumbent to name his successor. The legislature and forms of a representative republic were retained.

1843. The completely unrealistic constitution of the young revolutionaries who succeeded in overthrowing Boyer. The fight of the anti-Boyeristes had been for effective parliamentary government; to that end they provided for the direct election of the president by the people, a democratic vote, the exercise of legislative power by the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, and the subordination of military to civil authority. Such democracy was too radical for either élite or army to endure, and this constitution was shortly superseded.

1846. Riché's return (in most respects) to the constitution of 1816. He kept the principle that the president should be elected, not appointed for life by his predecessor; but the election was by the combined Senate and Chamber, rather than by democratic vote of the people.

1849. Soulouque's constitution, founding his personal and gaudy Second Empire.

1859. Geffrard's return to the Pétion constitution of 1816, as revised by Riché in 1846, with a few details added to meet changes in social conditions in the last decade.

1867. Salnave's modifications of the constitution of 1859. The parliamentarians were in control once more, and inserted the require-

● 175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the
language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the
hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite
of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a reexamination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new
(178) constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little
more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document
Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the
time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced
through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision
[423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by
foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous
constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of
unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury
in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918
[641] constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many
expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments
were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be
ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in
1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

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[7] Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution 642
once more increased the power of the president. [641]
1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from
the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling [643]
the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive
hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it
possible for the president to be reëlected.

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of 642
Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of
a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has 643
varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the
privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two
presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon,
were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of
being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred
by an ignominious end.

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" 643
—a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since
internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has [701]
been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until
1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a [706]
general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, [716]
but these important in the general roadless condition of the country);
most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations
in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" [792]
tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement
he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases
which interest him.

The one body which might conceivably check the president, 643
namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's
men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house [646]
from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives
would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army
(which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature.
By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the [646]
legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since
he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really
limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by

692 public, or against any of the secretaries of state or other important officials; but if this court was ever convoked, records of its actions are lacking.[8]

The most important actually functioning court was that of Cassation. In American terminology this would be called the Court of Appeals, reviewing cases coming up from the civil and criminal courts of the important towns. It sat at Port-au-Prince, and consisted of fourteen judges appointed by the president and his cabinet.

[177] Boyer had borrowed most of the forms of important Haitian courts from France, but he could not transfer to his country the spirit and tradition which made those courts function in France. The High Court of Justice remained a mere plan; the national Court of Cassation and the so-called department courts in the four to eight large towns operated under close presidential scrutiny; only the juges de paix, dealing with small and homely cases, had comparative freedom.

● 175 It was generally acknowledged throughout the nineteenth century
695 that Haitian judges, whether of the Court of Cassation or of the
department courts, could be influenced by pecuniary and political
693 considerations. The odds were heavy in favor of any suitor who was
liberal in his bribes to the judges; "justice" could be bought, and
175 was. By French tradition of justice, the prisoner was assumed to be
693 guilty until he was proved innocent. In Haiti he was bullied, cajoled, and cross-questioned in order to force a confession, and to make him state in open court what he was said to have admitted in his preliminary examination. Confessions were obtained by beatings, and prisoners were occasionally even tortured to death.

175 Another characteristic of the nineteenth-century courts—and not
695 in Haiti alone—was the tardiness of their procedure. Consider the
civil case in one of the department courts. If a creditor instituted a suit against a debtor in one department and obtained a favorable verdict, the defendant was permitted to appeal from the sentence to the court of an adjoining department, and so on in succession throughout the whole series; if the last court confirmed the judgment of the first, the defendant could then move it into the Court of

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[692] [8] This Supreme Court would, according to the constitution, be formed only by proclamation of the Senate (and therefore under the ultimate control of the president), and might not hold its sessions in a spot more than twelve leagues from the seat of the Senate. Consisting of fifteen judges to be chosen by lot from the tribunals of the five Haitian departments, a two-thirds majority would be necessary for conviction, and no appeal might be made from its decisions.

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Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed 175 the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal 695 from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just.

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must consult with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were 693 appointed by the government because of political considerations. Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in 695 general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in 641 particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts.

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before 691 the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic 674 have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10]

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[9] Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's sternest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

[10] In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [683]

674 Soldiers, then, had no great difficulty policing town and country-
369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
696 paix who would, if necessary, sentence him to jail—which meant
697 sending him to one of the larger towns. This was rather a severe penalty, for the jails were filthy; moreover, only about ten cents a week was ordinarily allotted to each prisoner for food with the result that if a prisoner's family did not supply him, he was likely to be near starvation. Extra work was required for extra fare. Haiti was probably no worse off in respect to its jails than most European and American countries at the time, for this was before the era of prison reform. Inmates of jails were likely to be only petty thieves.

697 During certain régimes the presidents or their generals managed to have numbers of convicts sentenced to hard work, in order to have forced labor on their private estates or projects dear to them. Under any administration there were likely to be a few convicts who performed repair work on streets and roads. It was the usual practice to chain or rope them together by pairs, three yards apart; accompanied by soldiers with loaded muskets, the convicts labored from daylight to sunset, with an hour and a half for a meal at noon. The government pretended to provide for them, but in order to save expense two of the criminals accompanied by two soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent about the neighborhood to beg for the group. The result was that the wretches went ill fed and half naked. They slept in jail on beds which were little more than boards.

701 The final and most persistent branch of government has been the
● 175 army.[11] Owing to the overmilitarization of Haiti, generals were perennially participating in the civil government—or engaged in overthrowing it. It was to be expected that following the revolution the new independent state formed in 1804 should have a military cast. Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, Geffrard, Boyer, Cangé, Yayou, Magloire Ambroise, Férou, François, Capoix, Rigaud—these were the great generals and the only important statesmen. It was as if in America not only Washington had been a military leader, but also Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, Hamilton, Madison, Pinckney,

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[647] [11] In most governments there has been a body which, although connected with the legislature, had functions pertaining to the law. This was the Chamber of Accounts, a body of five men who examined into and reported to the president upon every branch of expenditure and collection of revenues. It might recommend to him certain financial reforms or improvements, but had no power to enforce its suggestions.

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Patrick Henry, Randolph, and Samuel Adams as well. Madiou estimates 175
that there were 52,500 men in the army in 1804, when Haiti's 701
population was less than 400,000.[12]

Fear of the return of the French kept the army large, and the 175
administration of agricultural affairs under both Dessalines and 712
Christophe was in charge of it. The construction of a fortress in every 466
district put laborers under the direct influence of the military.[13] In [705]
addition to the corvée, or forced labor, required to construct these fortifications, the workers of the nation in the time of Dessalines also had to clear the hillsides and the ravines connecting valleys, and plant them with bananas, yams, plantains, and other provisions to supply the garrisons which manned the forts.

The Emperor left his army to feed and clothe itself. Occasional 175
rations were given as a part of wages, but they were irregularly 705
distributed. In the South particularly the troops began to murmur 701
and desert, stirred up by their mulatto officers who were themselves no better rewarded, and who were already beginning their plot to overthrow the Emperor. The accusation was made that the money which should have gone to the army was being used on Dessalines' mistresses. The soldiers indulged themselves in that most damaging of Haitian weapons, the witty song, full of double meanings but deadly in its thrust at public personages; by these symbolic songs the
fall of Dessalines was not only predicted but actually prepared. 175

Christophe kept a military state, but he had learned many lessons 643
from watching affairs under Dessalines. Realizing that he could not 701
trust the preservation of his régime to the fickleness of an army which 625
had seen his rise to power and had already deserted its first commander in chief, knowing too that there was treason even among his own guards, he made a contract with a company of foreign merchants for the transportation of twenty thousand blacks from Africa. These were to make up a military force independent of the Haitians,

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[12] *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 122.

[13] Each general was commanded by Dessalines to build a fort on one of the moun- [712]
tains in his district. The design seems to have been left to the general. A few of the fortifications were truly impressive. Christophe built La Ferrière near Milot in the North; Pétion the fortress of Jean-Jacques at Grand Fond, four leagues from Port-au-Prince; Capoix called his Les Trois Pavillons, in the range of mountains back of Port-de-Paix; Cangé and Yayou together built Campan near Léogane; Magloire Ambroise constructed a fortress near Cap Rouge and called it by that name; Geffrard built Platon near Les Cayes; Férou built Mafranc near Jérémie; François began but did not finish Le Bonnet Carré near Aquin.

643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police,
whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their
origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts
of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over
property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry
and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a
military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and
each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few
acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The
usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax
to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers,
he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the
laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of
authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition
of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*,
to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were
chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by
way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different
—similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government,
different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man
between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law
to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line),
or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under
Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed
in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[714] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily
inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they
managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every
[465] hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party
was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

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[14] *Op. cit.*, II, 209.

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701 Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some
[512] mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere
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703 subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in
tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No
175 person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

701 By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up
625 to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward
175 appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les mauvais sujets*, guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

175 A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the
701 support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and
[644] loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in
[703] nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "*tout Haïtien qui n'était pas général de division était au moins soldat.*" The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the
[648] radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

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[15] Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 310.

[p. 250]

XIV

COMMERCE

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THIS book is no more fundamentally concerned with the detailed economic history of Haiti than with its intimate political events; our attention is bent here, as elsewhere, on the broad functioning of social institutions. Peasant agricultural life has already been depicted: the products of the peasant's labor, when marketed, have brought whatever prosperity the state and its ruling caste have enjoyed. These marketed products have consisted chiefly of coffee, with a very little sugar and cotton. The present section concerns Haiti's economic relations with the outside world.

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It was the commerce of the colony of Saint-Domingue which made that small division of the Antillean island so valuable to its mother country. Exports in the last year before the revolution are estimated at fifty million dollars (461 million livres) in terms of modern money.[1] Although commerce was seriously interrupted by the troubled state of affairs in the 1790's, the upswing of prosperity under Toussaint indicated that the country had still highly profitable enterprises. Merchants in the young United States were particularly intent upon the benefits to be derived from trade in molasses. All foreign trade was violently interrupted once more in 1802–3, when the revolution was in progress; but the interest of larger nations in what would issue from the Haitian declaration of independence in 1804 was out of all apparent proportion to the size of the tiny country. Their interest was partially in the question of whether ex-slaves could rule themselves politically; even more they were interested in the economic future of Haiti.

Three divergent economic policies were pursued by the early rulers, three variations among which future presidents might choose the one in their opinion most profitable. That of Dessalines was progressively to isolate Haiti, tolerating foreign trade only so long as it seemed necessary to establish the country's self-sufficiency. Christophe's, on the other hand, was the traditional monarch's

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[1] H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy* (2d ed., New York, 1929), p. 25; Antenor Firmin, *M. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis, et la république d'Haiti* (New York, 1905), pp. 435–436.

policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with 175
his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of 439
mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so 175
weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessa- 177
lines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense 643
was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every 655
precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between 466
his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious 439
cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with
that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white
residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic [166]
survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a [24]
project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the
centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of
the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never
see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee
and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations.
On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which
a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would
sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impreg- [712]
nable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[a] which would
be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport [491]
was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back [509]
country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved [361]
his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap
Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the
Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to
transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation
Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines 175
kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted 466
under Toussaint.

[a] See p. 247 and note 23.

175 439 under Toussaint. The ravages of warfare were partially repaired, so that commerce once again appeared at the seaports. English, American, Danish, Swedish, and German vessels now shared what once the French had monopolized. Toussaint's export duties of ten per cent on sugar, coffee, cotton, and cacao were kept by Dessalines, and import duties likewise remained just about the same as formerly: twelve per cent.

175 439 437 A strange stopgap trading scheme was devised. Dessalines named the specific ports at which foreign ships might enter, then established a number of Haitian "consignees" at each of these ports. Numbers were given to each of these men. The first ship which entered the harbor was consigned to the shop of the trader having Number 1, the second to Number 2, and so on until each consignee had dealt with a foreigner, when Number 1 would receive the right to a second ship's cargo.[3] The captain of a vessel sent to Haiti did not know until his arrival in port who would be his consignee. If the probity of the Haitian merchant to whom fate assigned the captain did not inspire confidence, he was not obliged to sell goods to him—but was prohibited from selling them thereafter anywhere else in the country.

In this system there was room for every sort of irregularity and graft. More often than not Dessalines gave the assignments to his favorites, this to a military leader, that to an administrative officer, the other to some simple citizen whom he wished to reward. Often two ships would appear on the horizon at the same time: a consignee would then rush to the officer of the port and promise him half or a quarter of his commission if he would assign the more important of the vessels to his own number; the officer would then order the richer vessel in first.

Violent discontent arose over this system, which meant great profit to the beneficiaries of the monopoly and nothing to those excluded from it. As usual under a rigid system, means were found to evade the monopoly. Foreign ship captains found it well worth their while to sell clandestinely to individuals not high in the favor of the Emperor. This smuggling increased, the captains being both ingenious and adaptable to the needs of their dealers; sometimes the trade was wholesale, sometimes retail. Naturally enough, the Emperor imposed heavy fines on the smuggling operations when detected, but the illicit trade did not cease. [687]

[3] This mode of consignment was sanctioned by a decree of Dessalines on September 6, 1805.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966

SV3 Haiti SV3

● 175 433 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 466 439 579 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines: intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reëstablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 439 437 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 439 648 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

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[4] See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.

[5] His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

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175 439 648 recognition to the kingdom specifically failed to pay him proper respect. Moreover he seized the property of American merchants in his kingdom to make good a sum of $123,955.19 he could not recover from a Baltimore firm.[6] Agriculture flourished in the North, but the English were not yet certain whether Haïtian credit could be trusted. The demand of the traders for cash was allowed, and so with almost no risk British dealers supplied the steady demand for staple trade goods,[7] taking in return either coffee and sugar or the equivalent in cash.

175 439 Christophe was chary of publishing any specific figures on the economic life of his kingdom: we have no way, therefore, of estimating either the annual production or the annual income. One of his statesmen, Baron de Vastey, affirmed that in 1817 more than 150 ships were supplied with cargoes of coffee and sugar at the Cape alone.[8] This number is equal to that which sailed from the port during its most peaceful and prosperous periods in colonial times; one suspects the baron of exaggerating. We know, however, that Christophe was the chief merchant in his kingdom, setting his own prices and disposing of his own goods before others could sell; we know, too, that he left a large fortune in his coffers when he died.

175 579 439 Like Dessalines, King Henry Christophe had his pirates, and redoubtable ones. But he warned them to prey only on French ships bound for ports in Pétion's republic in the South; he did not wish his trade interfered with in the North.

The policies of Dessalines and Christophe were personal, based upon their subjective prejudices and preferences; those of Pétion were more in accord with the practice of other civilized nations of the time. They had to be, perforce, in view of the economic and political position of his republic.

175 439 648 Southern Haïti had never, even in colonial times, been so intensely cultivated as the North. Foreign traders were accustomed to deal at the Cape, now the capital of Christophe's dominion, while Port-au-Prince was but a secondary market. After the civil war Christophe had practically allied himself with Great Britain. If this coup were to be counterbalanced, Pétion would have to choose for allies among

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[6] See Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*, p. 48.

[7] Christophe did not encourage his people to purchase any of the extravagantly rich manufactures of Europe, but rather to keep their wants simple.

[103] [8] Formerly Cap François, then Cap-Haïtien, but under Christophe renamed in his honor Cap-Henry; it is now Cap-Haïtien.

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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, 175
and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of 439
her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his 648
people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of
foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate
production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United
States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern
ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on [651]
goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to
five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the 175
greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and 439
managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues 652
were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a
respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's 175
footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the 439
pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem 652
never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country
ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so
eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its
attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly [441]
the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest
days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was [452]
partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established
as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of
interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the 175
only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on 439
a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most
of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, 656
however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the 441
laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of
the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law
of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that
of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent;
all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first
secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

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[9] See the *Arrêté* of October 13, 1814.

175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
459 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[18] The
441 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no
foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses
cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners
were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large
434 enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
443 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, em-
441 ployed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the
countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one
source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

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[504] [18] Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of *Haiti*.

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list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11] 175 439 24

Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13] 175 434 178 24 458

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[11] See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 175–190. [113]

[12] Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence." [249] [257] [274]

[13] These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

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● 175 452 453 If contemporary testimony can be credited, the complete indifference of the Haitian élite to business was matched by their ignorance of finance when this was anything more complicated than cash payment transactions or face-to-face exchange. They seem to have been wholly unfamiliar with the uses of commercial paper, the meaning of overdrafts, or bills of exchange. Individual credit was not understood, nor was a signature enough to start a flow of business. As one person from France put it in 1846, "It takes 10,000 francs of money to do 10,000 francs of business."[14] If a merchant doing a good business found his purse empty and needed only to borrow in order to purchase other goods, that circumstance offered to his mind "a redoubtable extremity enveloped in profound mystery; and it is a rule of loyalty and of honor to which Haitian commerce is never false, that the paper on which a man has placed his signature should remain, until the day the loan is paid back, impenetrably shut up in the portfolio of the lender."

[426] Interest, if money could be borrowed at all, was at the rate of one per cent a day, three per cent a month, and from sixteen per cent to twenty per cent a year. Thus letters of credit and promissory notes never moved the slightest business transaction in the country. To seek credit was to confess one's financial embarrassment.

175 45 The economic ills which harassed Haiti under Boyer were, to a greater or less degree, the same that bedeviled the country for the rest of the century. It seems worth while to list them, for they reveal the mentality of the ruling clique and caste—a mentality which could see no reason for altering of these basic matters, and which during administration after administration devoted itself to superficialities. Haiti's weaknesses were not entirely due to folly and clumsiness, however, but to a perfectly natural ignorance. There was no background for economic thinking: how should ex-slaves with a handful of old freedmen be familiar with credit, banking, overdrafts, and the like? Even education in France would not necessarily offer enlightenment on these matters. "Culture" meant literature, not economics.

These, then, have been the major economic defects of Haiti, 1806 to 1915, due partly to ineptitude, partly to imperfect education:

175 454 648 1. The exclusion of all foreign or white investment, industry, and capital. One article in every constitution was given over to this

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[14] R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 183.

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on 175
white ownership of land and financial investment in the country 454
was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that 648
financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would
somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of [829]
pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion 175
to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained 701
the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity. [434]

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that [669]
Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor;
it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the 175
peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching 24.
the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the 175
staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign mer- 441
chants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in 439
the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could 648
deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a
citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking. [453]

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[15] In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

[16] See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

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441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow
439 patriotism biased their decisions.

644 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject
to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but
175 exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of
651 funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee
489 exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer
657 in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every
[648] administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to
245 the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made
foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the
439 government which made a contract might be out of office before the
66 ink was dry.

10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits
175 were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not
439 those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the
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[643] [17] Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest,
[159] and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief
[661] who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to 175
population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade 565
while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained 439
from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, 178
she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. 433
Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing
white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end [461]
of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian 175
gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free Ameri- 648
can Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a 105
pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

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[18] John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says:
"[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly [433]
three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

[19] Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793.758, and imports at $4,660,174; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

[20] Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans.* See particularly pp. 3–9.

[21] His complete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tinner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

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towns there was a surplus of shopkeepers, but nothing like enough producers of goods; that in the country few Haitians of intelligence and capital paid any attention to agriculture; and that Haiti needed more than anything else people of brains, not afraid of physical activity, and people with capital. The author had observed well. His characterization of the Haiti of 1860 was still true fifty years later.

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[p.265]

XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, 178
national problems have to do with external as well as internal 66
affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade,
treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business 648
depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics.

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 175
1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, 648
the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is
true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, [871]
but these remained only a short while and had little influence even [242]
among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the [797]
few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times.
From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an educa- [871]
tion, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems.

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

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Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

175 648 the nineteenth century about loans and insurrections. Haiti maintained legations in those countries to which she exported most of her coffee and from which she might obtain credit. Revolutionary leaders sometimes promised as a bait for foreign assistance either tariff preferences or the cession of Môle Saint Nicolas for a naval base; if successful, they might fulfill the first promise but, because of the Monroe Doctrine and the watchful jealousy of the big powers, the Môle was never ceded. The United States had varied dealings with Haiti. Before the Civil War there was more than one movement to transplant freed slaves from this country to Haiti; after the war the United States came very near annexing Haiti; and negotiations over the cession of the Môle did not end until America acquired Guantanamo Bay, across the Windward Passage in Cuba, as a naval base to guard the entrance to the Caribbean.[1]

It was finally the combination of complicated economic affairs and political collapse which produced the Occupation of 1915. In the 175 652 457 preceding year both France and Germany threatened to send warships to collect loans due them, and were stopped only by the outbreak of the World War. An American bank held as its subsidiary the Bank of Haiti, in which the government deposited its funds; when in 1914–15 the presidents followed each other in rapid succession, the bank on instructions from New York refused to allow the government to withdraw its funds. Haiti in retaliation threatened to seize its deposits by force, but the New York bank persuaded the United States government to send a ship to transfer the gold from Port-au-Prince to New York. There were other financial complications, particularly those relating to defaulted payments to a railroad 175 648 [579] company. What finally precipitated the Occupation, however, was anarchy. When, in July, 1915, President Sam slaughtered 168 political prisoners and was himself mobbed and murdered, the American government ordered the landing of its Marines from a warship conveniently anchored in the harbor near Port-au-Prince.[2]

From 1915 to 1934 the foreign affairs of Haiti were under the direction of the United States, whose main concern was to order the economic relations of the country in such fashion that Haiti should

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[1] The foreign relations of Haiti with the United States have been clearly treated in Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938.*

[2] One of the best accounts of the events leading up to the Occupation is that of H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy.*

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and 175
American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a 648
financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation [457]
came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid;
the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupa-
tion, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs,
she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washing-
ton.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isola- 175
tion. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made 648
their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American
authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean
republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours [491]
at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au- [744]
Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes
that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems 175
have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since 642
the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute,
subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had 65
the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of
the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years
the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politi-
cians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded [669]
some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for
their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such
movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most govern- [669]
ments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to
frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations
have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal prob-
lems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite,
at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the
maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A
few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know
what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reason- [161]
able solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding [164]
are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and [871]
education.

So it had been with the subject peoples of the island ever since its 175
discovery. The Spaniards introduced a wide variety of European 164
diseases to Española (an epidemic of smallpox in 1500 was estimated
to have killed 200,000 Indians in the island) which did not disappear
as the Indians gave way to Negroes. Three centuries of the slave
trade brought blacks from many parts of Africa, and with them
most of the deadliest plagues of that continent. During the flourishing
days of French control over Saint-Domingue, Negro slaves were
afflicted by a wide variety of diseases, the commonest being yaws,
tetanus, intestinal worms, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, and scrofula,
although others were certainly not absent. Only to yellow fever,
probably brought with them from Africa, did the blacks seem to
develop a certain immunity. Most plantations had a doctor in [759]
attendance, but medical skill during the eighteenth century was not
advanced enough to cope successfully with scourges whose cause
was then unknown.

After freedom there were fewer doctors than ever, less sanitation, 175
and a worse diet. When a person was ill, his one alternative to suffering 159
the disease to take its course was to consult the Vodun priest, for
the commonly accepted explanation of disease was a spiritual one. 756
If God (that is, the Christian God) had sent the illness, nothing could 753
be done except to bear it, for God's will was unalterable; if it were
the result of magic worked by some enemy, the identity of that
enemy and the magical means used must be ferreted out so that
countermagic might be employed. Vodun practitioners were, in- 755
deed, quite as important in their rôle of healing as in performing
strictly religious rites. In the course of their efforts to cure disease
they often stumbled upon homely but effective cures; no doubt also
the mental effect of the patient's faith sometimes helped him to
recover, even when the medicines administered had no specific value.

The "triple threat" to Haitian health is the morbid group: malaria, 164
hookworm, and yaws. The first two are familiar enough in parts of
the United States, and require only short comment. For centuries
malaria has sapped the vitality of people in southern lands, giving
them a reputation for indolence which is not wholly deserved. Haitian
peasants were during the entire nineteenth century accused of
laziness; when a strapping man lay all day in the shade of a tree, it was
logical enough for a white visitor to suppose that he was willfully
loafing. The critics might have been more temperate if they had
known what it was to be perpetually full of malaria, with a body

871 no longer peasants. What good would a literary education do them? Yet those who have advocated a technical or practical curriculum have been met with a perfect storm of opposition. Such training would, it has been argued, merely augment and perpetuate the social stratification of the country; moreover, since no Haitian élite have been technically trained nor had any desire to be, the teaching of the whole rural mass would have to be in the hands of aliens—[875] white Americans, more than likely. Once again, it is a matter of current attitudes: the rural teacher keen to rise out of the masses into the upper class would, if the curriculum were technical, be required to abandon the gratifying display of his literary knowledge, and devote his talents instead to the manual skills from which he had been trying to escape.

871 875 It is hardly necessary to mention the insuperable problem of training the teachers and persuading them to dedicate their lives to rural education: to live away from the amenities of urban life, at a minute salary, among an ignorant peasantry. Only the devotion of rare patriots would prompt such complete self-sacrifice, even if the government had a tithe of the funds necessary for educating teachers for their jobs and paying them a living wage.

● 175 871 A glance at Haitian history will also help to explain the sorry state of education. In 1804, of course, there was not a single school in the country, and Dessalines was too much preoccupied with other affairs to give the matter a thought; besides, being illiterate himself, he may well have thought learning unimportant, or at least, embarrassing. Both Christophe and Pétion showed an exemplary zeal for education, although the results accomplished by them seem small enough. They were both impressed by the Lancasterian method then in vogue in England, and modeled the few schools they sponsored upon it. Christophe, always an Anglophile, established five "*grandes écoles nationales*" at Cap-Henry, Port-de-Paix, Sans Souci, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc, with English masters at the head of each.[12] Pétion established at Port-au-Prince a Lycée Haïtien in 1816, and assigned an "instructeur" in every parish. The curriculum of the Lycée—ancient and modern languages, rhetoric, logic, ethics, elements of mathematics, ancient and modern history, geography, and drawing—is an indication of the limited scope of the program. It was purely

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[12] Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue*, pp. 534-535.

for the élite, and was purely cultural. By 1828 there were lower 175
schools in six towns of the country, but only one higher school in 871
the whole of Haiti.[13]

A report on the condition of education in 1842 showed that the Lycée still existed, its curriculum now limited to French, English, Spanish, Latin, mathematics, composition, history, and fencing.[14] Only 150 students were enrolled. By 1843 there were eleven secondary schools. The question was even raised whether Boyer's failure to promote education during the twenty-five tranquil years of his rule might not have been deliberate, on the principle that it is easier to govern ignorance than knowledge.[15] Actually, however, there was little pressure for education, and so Boyer did nothing.

Geffrard more than any other president of the nineteenth century encouraged education, with the result that almost 20,000 children received some kind of schooling. The census of 1875 made the following estimates:[16]

4 lyceums	with	543 pupils
6 girls' high schools		563
5 girls' secondary schools		350
165 primary schools		11,784
200 rural schools		5,939
1 medical school		25
1 school of music		46
Total		19,250 pupils

[162]

To these must be added a few pupils in private schools and in the [797] recently established Catholic schools of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne and the Sisters of Cluny.

Toward the turn of the century, when reformers were writing books while the whole country seemed to be slowly dying under its stupid presidents, many a proposal was made which hit squarely upon the need of education and the necessity of a specifically practical curriculum. Joseph Justin[17] urged technical training by experts, and many others hammered away at the same idea. A small sum

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[13] Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, I, 83, 120–122, 158.
[14] John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 74 ff.
[15] Mark B. Bird, *The Black Man* (New York, 1869), p. 140.
[16] Cited by Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 293.
[17] *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes* (Paris, 1894–95), 2 vols.

175 871 was put into the national budget to be used for schools, but it seems generally to have been used as a fund for presidential patronage. There were even "school teachers" who could not read, but were nevertheless paid a regular monthly stipend. The principal of the Lycée at Gonaïves could neither read nor write, the music teacher there knew not a note of music, and the medical director could not name the simplest drugs.[18] Dantès Bellegarde, one of Haiti's notable intellectuals, as a minister under Nord Alexis (1902–8) made definite proposals which, had they been carried out, would have gone far toward effecting a radical reform. Minister again under Oreste (1913–14), he succeeded in building up an educational fund, but before he could spend it properly Oreste was deposed and the money used by his successor, Zamor, for military purposes.[19]

175 87 By 1915, before the Occupation began, the country had about 730 public schools. Of these, 6 gave advanced courses in medicine, law, applied science, and commerce; 10 offered a secondary classical education; 8 were special secondary boys' schools; and 15 were special secondary girls' schools. The teachers all got their training in Haiti, and the curricula and methods were almost entirely French.[20] Bellegarde had divided the country into 14 school districts, and by 1919 the official figures showed the following enrollment:[21]

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387 elementary rural schools	with	21,960 pupils
206 elementary urban schools		13,881
105 presbyterial schools		4,836
49 mixed private schools		825
29 Catholic girls' schools		5,141
8 Catholic boys' schools		2,576
10 mixed popular schools		1,009
2 girls' professional schools		133
1 manual training school		555
60 national high schools		2,012
Private elementary schools		5,481
Private high schools		2,904
Total		61,313 pupils

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[18] See Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

[19] Dantès Bellegarde, *Pour une Haïti heureuse* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), pp. 100 ff.

[20] Dantès Bellegarde, *Un Haïtien parle*, p. 31.

[21] *Livre bleu d'Haïti*, 1919–20 (Port-au-Prince, 1920), pp. 21–22.

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These figures seem moderately impressive by comparison with those of 1875; but a government report of 1931 states[22] that of the 361 rural schools visited by investigators, 89 had no seats for their pupils, and 157 had only from one to three benches; 122 had neither desks nor tables upon which the pupils might work; 341 had no maps. Of the total number of 977 benches found in all the rural schools, 303 were almost unusable, and of the 26 maps in existence, 13 were entirely beyond use. Of the 355 teachers examined, 257 could not read, and 2[illegible]8 could not add, subtract, multiply, or divide. The average monthly salary was 32.07 gourdes, or $6.21. Of the 17,679 pupils enrolled in rural schools, only 4,022 attended. In this same report President Vincent claims to have made a radical reform in all these matters. His rural teachers are trained, many of them at the government agricultural school at Damien; school equipment has been distributed; salaries have been raised to 65 gourdes, or $13.

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The American Occupation showed itself keen to assist education, but unintentionally the measures taken by the whites ran afoul of politics to a serious degree. The excellent agricultural experiment school at Damien was filled with élite students who attended it, in the opinion of many, chiefly in order to receive the scholarships offered; moreover, the class question was raised and bitterly argued: Should peasant students live and study with the élite, and should the curriculum be the same for both? Finally, education was one of the few matters not specifically included in the treaty between Haiti and the United States as under American direction. The result was unhappy: the Occupation was accused of setting up a rival educational "system" to that of the government. Even Bellegarde, most of whose ideas the Americans were trying to carry out, found himself in opposition, chiefly as a result of methods and political implications involved.

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If only the budget of the country could be increased, one feels that the rural educational problem might be dealt with, for more and more people are aware of what education might do for the country. Even so, there are still many élite who betray their fear that with education the masses will desert the land and cease to be subservient.

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That the élite, who in fact control the country, should receive a training which would fit them for technical skills is a proposal often

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[22] *"L'Oeuvre d'éducation rurale du gouvernement du Président Vincent"* (Imprimerie de l'État, Port-au-Prince, 1936).

197 a language into their daily speech. What the Americans have done to English, the Haitians in general have done to Créole. It is pertinent briefly to review the early history of Créole in order to comprehend the distinctly Haitian contributions to the language.

● 175 579 Through most of the seventeenth century Caribbean waters were full of pirates and buccaneers preying upon Spanish shipping. The effective monopoly which lordly Spain held in the preceding century over the trade of Europe with her rich Mexican and South American colonies began, in the early years of the new century, to crumble before the ingenious, speedy, and daring assaults of non-Spanish raiders. French, Dutch, and English sailors were all ready to try their hand at capturing laden Spanish ships. The rich cargoes of gold, silver, and merchandise were alluring enough to make the risk seem worth taking. And indeed the risk was not too great, for Spain's stately galleons were antiquated and cumbersome, generally no match for the flyboats[1] which had speed and much greater manageability. More and more Spanish control over the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, declined as the freebooters increased.

175 579 648 French sailors were among the most numerous and reckless of the gadflies who made life miserable for the Spanish traders. Drawn from the northern and northwestern provinces of France, these men had been seafarers all their lives. Harrying Spanish shipping was the most lucrative career for French sailors, and as the seventeenth century wore on their numbers in the Caribbean increased. By 1660 they had established a raiding base on La Tortue, an island off the northern coast of Haiti, where they developed a characteristic way of life—economic, political, and social—between raids.[2] Their presence near Haiti gave France a claim, in the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), to the western part of the island. For the next hundred years this region was to be known as Saint-Domingue.

175 579 197 Créole was born of buccaneering. In the seventeenth century the French of Île-de-France had not yet supplanted the dialects of the French districts; the buccaneers consequently spoke their native speech, and since Norman sailors far outnumbered the others

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[1] Origin of "flibustier," "filibuster," and "freebooter."

[2] It was here that they came to be called "buccaneers." They raided the relatively deserted main island of Haiti (then still under Spanish control) for cattle roaming wild. These cattle they cooked over an open fire, with a certain kind of wood; the process was called "boucanning," and they themselves "boucaniers." They imported wives from the seaport towns of Normandy, and families began to be raised on La Tortue.

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Norman French became the dominant tongue of the French buccaneers. 579
Words were naturally added from the patois of the neighboring
French provinces of Picardy, Brittany, and Anjou, but 197
Norman remained the matrix.[3] With La Tortue as their home base, the buccaneers roamed the Caribbean, coming into constant contact with other people—contact which left its mark, as meetings generally do, upon the speech of the travelers.

There were still Indians left in some of the islands, and Indians 175
outnumbered Spaniards on the mainland. From these aborigines 197
Créole borrowed many individual words, these being generally the 192
names of things—flora and fauna, food, objects of daily life more or
less common throughout the Caribbean world.[4] The grammatical 193
contributions of the Indians were apparently only an emphasis upon tendencies already present in Norman French, such as that of keeping the verb form constant while making other words in the sentence do the work of indicating past, present, or future, continuous or completed action, and the like.

Engaged in buccaneering with the French were hundreds of 175
English privateers. Often English and French raided in partnership; 197
for many years both groups shared La Tortue. This contact left a
heavy mark upon Créole—a congenial one, indeed, for Norman 192
French had been for more than four centuries the official language of England. Now in the seventeenth century English was giving back to Norman many words in exchange for the ones it had taken.[5] More important than its verbal gift, however, was the influence it exerted toward a simple syntax. As compared with French forms,

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[3] An outstanding linguist, Jules Faine, in *Philologie créole*, p. 1, estimates that three out of four words in Créole are Norman. 175

[4] A very few of these Indian words have become familiar in French, and still fewer 192
in English; but one finds most of them, in one form or another, in the whole Caribbean basin. Examples are:

agouti, a small rodent
akoutou, a dish whose base is corn
caïman, alligator
igouane, a largo lizard
avocat, the avocado pear
calebasse, calabash
corossol, a green prickly fruit
gouyave, guava
igname, yam
hamac, hammock
ouragan, hurricane
bayahonde, a very hard wood
campêche, another hard wood
mabouya, small lizard
barbaco, barbecue
cassava, a starch plant
lambi, a mollusk or conch
tom-tom, a purée of bananas

[5] Henry Moisy, *Glossaire comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen, 1888), points out that the modern Norman dialect contains more than 5,000 words common to English and Norman, but not recognized in official French.

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175 Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, reën-
192 forced the Norman tendency.

197 From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue, when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the
567 new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand
197 for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands,
were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which
192 language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new.
175 The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced
Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

175 In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich
vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regu-
177 larities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and
197 so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indicate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast; tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian
[191] from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the
average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity, and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where 177
they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti. 197

Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves 175 or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their 567 families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, marassa, loa, houmfort, bocor, ouanga.

It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect 175 upon the language of which they soon became the predominant 197 users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the 194 Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue *their* own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several 175 western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of 192 onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "*bap*" to the verb "*tomber*," if one had fallen down lightly, or "*boum*" if heavily;

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[6] Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 170 words of undeniable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more. [174]

[7] *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 36–37.

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175 192 if a blow were given on the face the word "*pimme*" was added to the verb describing that blow, but if a stick had been used, "*bimme*" was added, and if a whip, then "*v'lap v'lap*."

175 193 One of the Negro contributions which gives a delightful charm to the language is the principle of doubling, whether the word is adjective, adverb, verb, or pronoun. Faine cites the following examples:

ioun bel, bel femme—an extraordinarily beautiful woman.
li té bien, bien malade—he was very gravely ill.
li marcher, l'marcher, l'marcher—he kept on walking and walking.
li-minme, li-minme—it is really he himself.[8]

175 538 Still another and very important Negro contribution is the wealth of proverbs. A person may say practically anything he chooses in proverbs, particularly if he uses to its fullest the significant tones of which his voice is capable. As many as 1,500 of these proverbs have been collected, and there is reason to believe that as many more could be found.[9] In general they say the same things proverbs say in any language:

Fer couper fer. Il faut du fer pour couper le fer; which is to signify, "Great needs demand great remedies."
Tit cochon tit sang. Un petit cochon a peu de sang; that is, "From each according to his means."
Sel pas besoin vanter tête li. Le sel n'a pas besoin de se vanter; or, "Real merit never needs to boast."

Since some of the proverbs make allusions to elephants and tigers, animals not found in the Caribbean region, it is clear that these at least, and maybe others, go far back in the wisdom of the folk.

538 Storytelling is a well-cultivated art in Haiti. The folklore of Créole is rich, some of it bearing close resemblance to the Negro tales current in the southern United States, particularly the Br'er Rabbit tales. When a group gathers and a story is about to begin, the teller says, "Cric?"—as if to say, "Shall I tell you a story?" or, "Are you ready?" To this his listeners reply, "Crac!"—or, "Please do! Certainly!" or, "We are listening." The two words together make a sort of rapport between raconteur and audience, an overture, "Once upon a time."

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[8] Faine, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[9] J. J. Audain, *Proverbes* (Port-au-Prince, 1877), cites 1,011 Haitian proverbs in Créole, and E. Chenet, *Proverbes créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1896), records 1,456 proverbs.

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Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of 538,
"Crict Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is 212
no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically,
with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between
two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies
may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order 539
that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its
differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La
Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His
own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases
as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps toutt bett té palé,	*Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,*
Té g'ain (palant pa respé)	*Il y avait (sauf votre respect)*
Té g'ain gnou fémel cochon.	*Il y avait une truie.*
Zott connin gen cochon bon?	*Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?*
Cila-là té fait zanmi	*Celle-ci avait fait amitié*
Avec gnou fémel chien, qui	*Avec une chienne, qui*
Té prett pou mi bas. Chien-là,	*Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chienne*
Gnou jou, dit cochon con ça:	*Un jour, dit à la truie:*
"Moin pré pou moin accouché,	*"Me voilà près d'accoucher,*
"Ma conmè, t'en pri! souplé,	*"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,*
"Pémett moin prété gnou coin	*"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin*
"Nan pac ou, pou pititt moin."	*"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."*[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off 538
precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the 196
truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li
mulatte; mulatte pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a
mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a
Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole 175
language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. 197
Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said
that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from [171]
Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English
influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

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[10] *Cric? Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et transcrites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.

[11] "*Zott*" means "*vous autres*"; "*gnou*" is "*une*."

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● 175 This was the situation in Haiti after 1791, and especially after
178 1804. The boundary walls of a slave economy, carefully built by the French in the eighteenth century and scrupulously guarded by all the whites, were smashed. The constricted limits in which Negro life had moved during slavery now ceased to exist as a channel. For years there was an unceasing effort on the part of Haitian leaders to give a new direction to the life of the blacks, but all those leaders (except Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe) found it more discreet, more congenial, even more logical, to follow the tide rather than to try to stem and direct it.

Between 1791 and 1804, then, the retaining walls of the old economic and political institutions disappeared. The next forty years were ones of experiment in stabilizing a new set of social institutions.[1] Efforts to make the new social structure efficient, orderly, progressive, all failed; by mid-century the undramatic and unconsciously exerted pressure of daily behavior on the part of hundreds of thousands of untutored Negroes gave Haitian institutions their new and recognizable character. The presidents thereafter rarely attempted serious reform in these institutions; on the contrary, they generally tried only to make use of them for their own personal benefit. The Haiti of 1860 was radically different from the Haiti of 1791–1804, while 1915 closely resembled 1860. Only since the Occupation by American Marines has the process of change begun to accelerate again.

Most adjustments arrived at by a whole society occur unconsciously. Great leaders may suggest new ways for a nation to follow which break with the past and are clearly more progressive and rational than the old ways, but it is the people who eventually accept or reject the novelty. They perform, as people always and continuously do, an act of unconscious, automatic selection upon the variations, eliminating this one and adopting that for reasons often apparently irrational or prejudiced. The result of such a steady process of selection is a recognizable group of folkways and mores which make Haitian culture, for instance, distinguishable from the culture of other near-by islands, Cuba or Jamaica, for example.

It is not always a great man who suggests a variation in the folkways and mores, nor yet even an important personage like a cabinet

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[1] The term "social institution" is here used to mean a consistent pattern of folkways and mores clustering about a fundamental human interest.

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minister or an outstanding intellectual. Variations are frequently 175
(some even say generally) mere casual accidents, surprising inspira- 178
tions of the moment. The changes which have come over the face of [771]
the Vodun religion are examples: in almost no instance can the additions or emendations be traced back to their originators, yet Vodun is clearly different now from what it was in Boyer's time. Just as no one knows who initiates a change in the folkway of language, coining a slang phrase, modifying a pronunciation, so the makers of most variations in folkways and mores are anonymous.

Given infinite time and patience, one might compile a list of mores in any country, beginning first with those which require absolute conformity from all persons, and running down to those which express social ideals but which may nevertheless be honored in the breach. In our own country, the mores condemning incest and cannibalism are not only our rules but our unanimous practice; and if a person breaks either we punish him severely. At the other end of our list are those mores requiring truthfulness and honor. In calling these American mores we pay homage to an ideal—and then tell our white lies as a part of the observance of social amenities, or make our "shrewd" business deals in order to get on in the world. For neither of these breaches of the mores is there any concerted social punishment; on the contrary, we have been known to praise those who broke them. In describing the culture of a society, therefore, it is necessary to report both the mores as ideal and the mores as practice.

184 The larger and more complex a society becomes, the fewer the mores shared in common by all members of that society. In a small colonial American village, isolated from much contact with strangers, the whole population was bound by scores of mores touching all phases of life. In modern America, on the contrary, if one should consider American society as a whole it would probably be difficult to find a dozen mores shared commonly by us all, or if shared, exerting the same force to conformity. We have had to develop a measure of tolerance with our 130 million neighbors, a live-and-let-live principle which has been aptly called "antagonistic coöperation."

Each district in Haiti, in the effective isolation of illiteracy and sedentary life, has developed its own characteristic mores, of which a limited number correspond with those of other Haitian districts. It is these general correspondences which have been treated in this book. Within each district, likewise, there is the usual hierarchy of rules

[p. 315]

NOTES

CHAPTER II

The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows: 175

1789–1791.	Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites.	[565]
1791–1793.	The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background.	[669] [563]
1793–1796.	Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint.	[648]
1796–1799.	Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites.	[643]
1799–1802.	Toussaint in full power as governor-general.	
1802–1803.	Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe.	[642]

PART III

Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are *too* new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, fit for the market. I do not mean to say that these Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I

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[1] An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

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175 563 believe they are less bad than many others in like circumstances. For not having great strength of character, they have neither great virtues nor great vices. The English farmers, Birkbeck and Flower, encountered similar troubles, and worse, when, forty years ago [that is, between 1820 and 1830], they brought over their English habits, and settled down with them among our farmers in Illinois."[2]

Montague sums up the general fate of American Negroes who migrated to Haiti by saying that some were exploited by the élite (who treated their own blacks in the same fashion), others persecuted by resentful peasant neighbors, and still others, who had expected manna to fall from the Haitian heaven, simply disillusioned at having to work, and so lost heart.[3]

CHAPTER XII

175 643 The following table of the presidents of Haiti summarizes in general the shifting political fortunes of the country. Those presidents who belonged to the élite caste are designated with an asterisk (*). It will be noted that the presidency has generally been in the hands of men from three departments: the North, where Negroes are predominant even among the leaders; the South, always a stronghold of the mulattoes; and the West, where the capital, Port-au-Prince, is located. The Department of the Northwest has never had a president, and the Artibonite only three. The color of the presidents is indicated.

Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
1. Dessalines	Black	1804–6	North
{2. Christophe	Black	1807–20	North
{2. *Pétion	Light	1807–18	West
3. *Boyer	Light	1818–43	West
4. *Rivière-Hérard	Light	1843–44	South
5. Guerrier	Black	1844–45	Artibonite
6. Pierrot	Black	1845–46	North
7. Riché	Black	1847–47	North
8. Soulouque	Black	1847–59	West
9. *Geffrard	Dark	1859–67	South
10. *Salnave	Dark	1867–69	North
11. *Nissage-Saget	Light	1870–74	Artibonite
*12. Domingue	Dark	1874–76	South
13. *Boisrond-Canal	Light	1876–79	South
14. Salomon	Black	1879–88	South
15. Légitime	Black	1888–89	South
16. *Hyppolite	Black	1889–96	North
17. Simon Sam	Black	1896–1902	North
18. Nord Alexis	Black	1902–8	North
19. Simon	Black	1908–11	South
20. Leconte	Dark	1911–12	North

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[2] Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, pp. 14, 11.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 71–72.

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Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
21. Auguste	Light	1912–13	North
22. Oreste	Dark	1913–14	West
23. Zamor	Dark	1914	Artibonite
24. Théodore	Black	1914–15	North
25. Guillaume Sam	Black	1915	North
26. *Dartiguenave	Light	1915–22	South
27. *Borno	Light	1922–30	West
28. *Roy	Light	1930	West
29. *Vincent	Light	1930–41	West
30. *Lescot	Light	1941–	North

Summarizing this table, it can be seen that of the 31 heads of state only 13 have definitely belonged to the élite group. A few of the others might, by stretching the category, be regarded as members of this group. These 13, however, have governed for a total of 87 years, as compared with a rule of only 64 years by the representatives of the army clique. (It will be remembered that from 1807 to 1820 Haiti was separated and so had two heads of state.)

There have been 14 Negro rulers, 11 mulatto presidents, and 6 presidents who had at least a slight degree of white blood.

Of the 31, 13 represented the North (Christophe is included in this number, although he was born on the island of St. Christopher, from which he took his name); 8 came from the South; 7 from the West; 3 from the Artibonite; and none from the Northwest. The Northerners were in control of the government for 42 years; Southerners for 32 years; Westerners for 69 years; and the Artibonite presidents for less than 6 years.

CHAPTER XIV

1. *Taxation*

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The formative period of Haitian history, it is now evident, was between 1807 and 1820, when the young country was offered two sets of policies, generally opposed, to choose between: Pétion's and Christophe's. It is likewise clear that, since Pétion's required less discipline and self-restraint, and the country became reunited under Pétion's adoring secretary, Boyer, the easier path of Pétion was the one generally followed.

This choice is abundantly clear in the matter of taxation. Although the civil war between the two rulers was draining his treasury, Pétion either did not care or did not dare to tax his people. He relied rather upon heavy duties on trade in his ports, thus embarrassing commerce and taking away much of the profit from coffee. Christophe, on the other hand, without a scruple got millions by a tax on production amounting to one quarter of the annual crops of his kingdom;[4] consequently commerce in the North was free and that part of the island busy with prosperous trade. Christophe also taxed his nobles, charging a heavy fee for a patent of nobility, and also receiving annually a fourth of the crops raised upon their estates.

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[4] Copied from the practice of Toussaint and Dessalines.

● 175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
657 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
[652] income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was
[465] so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

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[5] See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

[6] May 4, 1808.

[7] *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une trouée. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son emporte-pièce. Il lui donna 838 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat 175
on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his 643
opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer 159
every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about
the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on [669]
from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops
declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial [458]
planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire [249]
against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley
were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was [464]
destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the
men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to
dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." [466]
Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity [464]
of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the [214]
treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally
uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own [311]
expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco
and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural 433
production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell 439
off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm 652
of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

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[8] Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the [175]
mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the [669]
threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the
plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between [648]
the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti
drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further [728]
hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

[9] Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

[10] Ibid., p. 98.

payments due to the French government.